

November highlights



from EMI and Virgin Classics

Spotlight release



Homage to Maria Callas

Angela Gheorghiu

The defining diva of this century performs a programme of beloved French and Italian arias inspired by the career and recordings of Maria Callas, the great diva of the last century.

The CD features arias strongly identified with Callas's repertoire from La bohème, Faust, Il pirata, Adriana Lecouvreur, Andrea Chénier, I Pagliacci, La Wally, Medea, Le Cid and Samson et Delilah, as well as two arias from La traviata, the opera that launched Gheorghiu's career in 1994. At the time, New York Magazine wrote, "Her lady of the camellias is a worthy successor to Garbo and Callas."

The deluxe edition comprises a CD encased in a hardcover book containing an essay from Angela, a gallery of glamorous new photos and exclusive access to a video and mini-feature on the making of the CD.

Also new this month



Mahler Symphony No. 6 Antonio Pappano

Mahler's Symphony No. 6 is brought vividly to life in a live concert recording by Antonio Pappano and the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia to commemorate the composer's double anniversary.



Liszt Lieder Diana Damrau

After her sumptuous album of orchestral lieder by Richard Strauss, soprano Diana Damrau marks the bicentenary of Liszt's birth with a programme of his most celebrated songs in German, French and Italian, accompanied by pianist Helmut Deutsch.



The Flute King Emmanuel Pahud

Pahud performs works composed for and by King Frederick the Great of Prussia, flautist, composer and patron of the arts, whose 300th birthday is commemorated in 2012. Joining Pahud are the Kammerakademie Potsdam and Trevor Pinnock.



Duetti

Philippe Jaroussky, Max Emanuel Cencic

The contrasting and complementary talents of two star countertenors come to the fore in a programme of duets and arias by Italian composers of the early 18th century, performed with Les Arts Florissants under William Christie.



The Renaissance of Italian Music

Works from composers central to the musical developments of the Italian Renaissance, from Palestrina to Monteverdi, complemented by an exploration of some of The National Gallery's most significant paintings from the same period.



The Christmas Album

Libera

This long-awaited Christmas album from the distinctive boys choir features a mixture of secular and sacred Christmas favourites. Libera's harmonies set to shimmering, mystical chords are "celestial sounds for the modern age".

Sounds of America Gramophone's guide to the classical scene in the US and Canada



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HE'S YOUNG, BUT GOOD

At 28, Krzysztof Urbański is now the youngest music director of a US symphony orchestra. Great timing, great talent, says Olivia Giovetti

ust as surely as Dvořák didn't expect to write one of his most enduring works while living in the United States, so wunderkind Polish conductor Krzysztof Urbański probably didn't expect his own American debut with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra to yield a musical directorship. It was Dvořák's beloved Ninth Symphony that won him his own instantaneous acclaim, and it was Urbański's US debut in April 2010 - conducting the same piece Dvořák premiered 117 years earlier - that delivered an equally explosive burst of fame (along with other eruptions).

Indeed, it was the Icelandic volcano Evjafjallajökull that stranded Urbański in Indiana following his commanding and assertive debut with the orchestra. And it was while he served out this unexpected furlough that he was offered the leading role of the orchestra's music director, a post he officially took up this past September.

'I knew that the Indianapolis Symphony was doing wonderful stuff and they're very ambitious,' says Urbański. Although his rehearsal time with the orchestra was short compared with the lengthier periods usually allotted in Europe, Urbański felt an immediate, almost mystical, rapport with the Indianapolis musicians. 'Somehow,' he observes, 'I think they were just reading my mind.'

Such a stroke of luck for Urbański also proved a stroke of good fortune for the ISO: its former music director, Mario Venzago, had made a hasty and unexpected departure at the onset of the 2009-10 season. In this lessthan-ideal situation, every guest conductor was considered as a possible candidate for the post, and things really began to look up when the then 27-year-old Urbański arrived in the Circle City.

'It became clear when he blasted through town that we needed to take a very hard look at this person,' says concertmaster Zach De Pue. 'He's strong-minded and has a great will to make music. He knows what he wants and he knows the scores inside out. We were seeing some other excellent people around the time, but Krzysz was an eyebrow-raiser.'

This wasn't the first time Urbański had raised eyebrows, though, and nor did Indianapolis offer a unique moment of serendipity - of



an ideal merging of timing and talent - in the life and career of the young maestro. Born in 1982 in the central Polish town of Pabianice, Urbański's entry into the world of music was itself accidental. When his childhood friend enrolled in music school, Urbański followed suit – after all, it was important not to lose touch with his favourite football-playing chum.

But by 2007, the year he graduated from the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw, he'd won the Prague Spring International Conducting Competition and had been appointed by Antoni Wit – his mentor and the music director of the Warsaw Philharmonic - as assistant conductor of the orchestra.

'His way of studying conducting, of working, show he's very clever,' says Wit. 'In future, I think he'll be up there with the greatest conductors. From the very beginning I could recognise in him a strong personality.'

The concept of 'cleverness', a trait he seems to have inherited from Wit, arises frequently when colleagues discuss Urbański. Three months before he gave his protégé the chance to conduct The Rite of Spring, Wit had an inkling that the original conductor of the piece might not pan out. It was at that point that he asked his assistant to ready himself for a possible performance. Then, 10 days before the concert, it was confirmed

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that the original conductor was out and Urbański was in, conducting the score from memory – a signature style – to an audience full of industry insiders. Many believed that his compelling performance was put together in less than a fortnight, only adding to the burgeoning aura of myth surrounding this rising star.

Urbański's career continued to flourish at an *allegretto* pace. In 2009, shortly after his debut, he accepted a position at the helm of the Trondheim Symfoniorkester in Norway. Like Indianapolis, Trondheim was busy searching for its next music director and, like their American counterparts, the TSO's musicians found themselves unprepared for the extraordinary initial impact of Urbański. They jumped fast.

'Here's this young, cute guy coming up on the podium,' laughs Trondheim hornist Irene Ruud, recalling her first rehearsal with Urbański. 'And he started to conduct. And in just 15 minutes or half-an-hour, he had the whole orchestra in his hands.'

Happenstance is one thing, but Urbański fortifies such enviable opportunities with a tenacious work ethic and obsessive devotion to the music. 'It is a huge responsibility,' he says. 'It's a great pleasure to be in the middle of the music on the stage and to have an influence on the musical sounds, but you have to make sure that what you're presenting is the best possible interpretation.'

In other words, and whatever the work, Urbański learns the score inside out. 'He keeps the music, everything, in his head, even details on bar numbers,' says Trondheim concertmaster Seiki Ueno with a

'Here's this young, cute guy coming up on the podium and in just 15 minutes he had the whole orchestra in his hands'

hint of awe over Urbański's attention to detail. And therein lies the real force behind the wow factor that attaches to this conductor. On the one hand, as Wit points out, it is now plausible for a 20-something conductor to hold a prestigious post, citing the powerhouse Angeleno maestro Gustavo Dudamel as another youthful trailblazer. Yet age – be it youth or grizzled maturity – will get a musician only so far, and while a fresh face looks good on promotional materials, any claims to greatness can only be expressed on the podium. And that is where Urbański excels. His ability to communicate his musical vision to both orchestra and audience is direct, poetic and organic.

'He knows the whole piece in his head, so that's quite amazing for the audience to see,' says Ruud. 'So young, so intelligent, and he's standing there without a score and just playing with the orchestra. I think he's got the magic touch. He's like our little rock star.'

'Krzysz has a way with his hands of showing the colours and articulations he wants,' adds De Pue. 'He holds the audience captive with his left hand and he makes understanding for us so clear...The potential for the orchestra to have such a relationship with a musician of this level, and sharing the possibilities of where he's going in his career, is very exciting for us.'

Urbański's plans – aside from an associate professorship at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music – will see him focus primarily on realising the ISO's promise as a world-class performer on the orchestral scene. One thing he especially looks forward to is bringing more Polish composers to Indianapolis. His debut concert with the ensemble started with *Little Suite* by Witold Lutosławski, a composer that Hoosier audiences can expect to hear more of. Other pieces on Urbański's wish list include works by avant-gardist Krzysztof Penderecki, the hauntingly romantic music of Karol Szymanowski, the film and orchestral composer



URBAŃSKI IN CONCERT

Urbański conducts Smetana March 29-31, 2012

Urbański samples from Smetana's tone-poem *Má vlast*, leading the ISO in 'Vyšehrad,' 'Vltava' and 'Šárka'. Prominent young cellist Zuill Bailey joins for Elgar's Cello Concerto in a programme that opens with Kilar's *Krzesany*.

Ravel & Shostakovich May 18 & 19, 2012

After an emphatic read of Shostakovich's Symphony No 10 in Norway, Urbański brings his interpretation across the Atlantic along with Ravel's *Pavane pour une infante défunte*. Macedonian pianist Simon Trpčeski performs Ravel's Piano Concerto in G.

Beethoven's *Eroica* Joshua Bell (Brahms) June 1 & 2, 2012

Krzysztof Urbański closes out his inaugural season with a bang, literally, with the opening notes of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony. The programme also incudes the star power of Joshua Bell playing Brahms's Violin Concerto and Krzysztof Penderecki's chilling string poem *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima*.

All performances are at the Hilbert Circle Theatre, Indianapolis. Please visit **indianapolissymphony.org** for further details

Wojciech Kilar and Henryk Górecki, of whom Urbański notes: 'He puts something magical between the notes.'

There's little danger, however, that Polish music will monopolise or even dominate the ISO's programming schedules. Bold works – from, for example, Smetana's *Má vlast* and Holst's *The Planets* to Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony and Shostakovich's Symphony No 10 – will complement the music of Urbański's mother tongue. Programming will often pair such major works with those by the conductor's compatriots, in order to draw musical connections between standard orchestral fare and the fresh sounds he plans to introduce. Some, such as Kilar's brief symphonic poem, *Krzesany*, are musical *amuse-bouches*, while others – such as Szymanowski's Violin Concerto, performed by De Pue – will be meatier entrées.

All told, a brave new world foretells not only of a bright future for Urbański, but also for the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra whose reputation must surely continue to grow under his inspired baton.

'My first professional performance was only four years ago, so it was within three years that I signed the contract with the Indianapolis Symphony,' says Urbański. 'It was very fast. But I don't want to say I'm uncomfortable with it. I was always dreaming about it. So, actually, right now all my dreams are coming true.'

THE SCENE

From a fascinating Brazilian commission at the New York Phil, to Marin Alsop and an epic organ symphony in Cleveland, Gramophone's pick of musical happenings across North America



NEW YORK

New York Philharmonic

Daniel Harding

Mahler Tenth (December 1-3)

Joshua Bell plays Tchaikovsky (December 7-10) Alan Gilbert CONTACT! (December 16, 17)

Following his much-anticipated debut with the New York Philharmonic last season, the dynamic 36-year-old British maestro Daniel Harding again leads America's oldest symphony orchestra, and is building a reputation as a serious Mahlerian. Last time. he led the Phil in Mahler's Fourth Symphony; this time it's the Tenth, Mahler's grand and gorgeous farewell to his none-too-faithful wife, Alma. The composer didn't live to complete the work, but left sketches that mapped out its transcendental destination. Harding then switches gear for several concerts featuring star violinist Joshua Bell who'll play the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto in D. And although December may feel like the bleak midwinter, the programme concludes with the pagan abandon of Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring. Mid-month, the orchestra returns in a more informal setting, continuing its CONTACT! Series, in which it presents contemporary fare.

Two concerts, with maestro Alan Gilbert at the helm will feature the world premiere of a new commission from rising Brazilian composer, Alexandre Lunsqui, titled *Fibers, Yarn, Wire* and also the 'mad monster mash' of HK Gruber's *Frankenstein!! a pandemonium for chansonnier and orchestra after children's rhymes*.

nyphil.org

NEW YORK Metropolitan Opera

Faust (November 29 - January 19)

The Tony Award-winning director Des McAnuff makes his Metropolitan Opera debut with this new production of Gounod's Faust - a co-production of the Met and English National Opera. McAnuff, the award-winning director of Jersey Boys brings a fresh sensibility to the opera, setting it in the early 20th century. In this conception of Goethe's pact-with-the devil romance, Faust is an ageing nuclear physicist responsible for creating the atomic bomb and filled with remorse for the destruction it has wrought. The singing promises to be devilishly good, with star tenor Jonas Kaufmann singing his first title role at the Met, opposite Marina Poplavskaya as the innocent Marguerite, and

bass René Pape as Mephistopheles. Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts.

metoperafamily.org

PHILADELPHIA Philadelphia Orchestra

The Philadelphia Legacy (December 8-11)

The financially beleaguered orchestra looks back on some of its significant world premieres, golden moments from its storied past, including Rachmaninov's ever-popular Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini. When the piece was premiered on November 7 1934, the composer played the piano part, with Leopold Stokowski conducting. Later that season, the pair recorded the piece and it soon became a classical hit, especially the lyrical Variation 18. This new presentation promises to dazzle, too, and will most likely be a high-energy affair with virtuoso Yuja Wang at the piano, and the Philly's dynamic new maestro. Yannick Nézet-Séguin at the helm. Apart from this 20th-century masterpiece, the orchestra will present Jennifer Higdon's flamboyant Concerto for Orchestra. By December, we should see what Nézet-Séguin and his band can really achieve.

philorch.org

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LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles Philharmonic

Shostakovich, Orango (December 2-4)

Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts three performances of an unusual world premiere - the prologue to Orango, an unfinished, long-lost opera by Shostakovich, Apparently. the composer started the scathingly satirical work in 1932 as a 'political lampoon on the bourgeois press'. The baritone protagonist is a human/ape hybrid who becomes a successful if sleazy journalist - the epitome of moral degeneracy - only to revert to apish behaviour. Originally commissioned by Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the revolution, Shostakovich abandoned the work unfinished. Only 40 minutes of the prologue were completed in piano-vocal score, which was unearthed from the composer's archives in 2006. Peter Sellars directs this production, which has been orchestrated from piano sketches by the British composer Gerard McBurney. McBurney says the music - calling for 11 solo voices and chorus - has a heightened, manic, silent-movie quality. Shostakovich's Symphony No 4, also composed during this politically turbulent period for the composer, follows Orango.

laphil.com

CHICAGO Lyric Opera of Chicago

Sir Andrew Davis Mozart *The Magic Flute*

Mozart *The Magic Flute* (December 6 - January 22)

The Lyric Opera's holiday show - complete with dancing bears and dinosaurs prancing through Mozart's enchanted forest. - is a surefire seasonal crowd-pleaser. Davis conducts a youthful cast. One of the most sought-after lyric sopranos, Nicole Cabell, returns after singing Micaela in Carmen at the end of last season. She will surely shine as Pamina, which is fast becoming one her signature roles (she made her debut in the part at the Met in 2008). The charismatic tenor Charles Castronovo stars as Tamino, French baritone Stéphane Degout plays the hapless and endearing birdcatcher Papageno, and Kathleen Kim promises to dazzle us as the Queen of the Night with her pitch-perfect high Fs. Austrian bass Günther Groissböck fills out the lower frequencies as Sarastro.

lyricopera.org

MINNEAPOLIS

St Paul Chamber Orchestra

Christian Zacharias

Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 3 (Dec 1-3)

The St Paul Chamber Orchestra, now in its 52nd season, shifts easily into a maestro-free mode. On this occasion, the German-born pianist Christian Zacharias will lead the orchestra from the keyboard in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 3 in C Minor. (Beethoven himself famously premiered the work in 1803 and played the solo part from memory, not having had a chance to set it down on paper.) Following the concerto, the orchestra will perform a suite of music from Beethoven's rarely heard ballet. The Creatures of Prometheus, written in the same 'middle' period as the concerto. Initially a success after its Vienna premiere. Beethoven's 'heroic and allegorical ballet' is now only occasionally revived, the overture being the one section performed with any regularity. Zacharias assembled this suite specially from the 18 pieces that constitute the ballet. Beethoven worked one of the themes from the work into the finale of the Eroica Symphony.

thespco.org

BOSTON

Boston Symphony Orchestra

Beethoven and Harbison (December 1-3)

Composer John Harbison's Symphony No 5 had its world premiere with the BSO in 2008. It's a dramatic, lyrical work for baritone, mezzosoprano and orchestra - which the composer refers to as an orchestral meditation on loss. The BSO is now giving the piece its second outing, in a series of performances led by Czech conductor Jiří Bělohlávek, chief conductor of the BBC Symphony and chief conductor designate of the Czech Philharmonic. This is his BSO debut, Levine having led the premiere. It's certainly an ambitious piece - with the composer setting music to the work of three poets: Czesław Miłosz, Louise Glück and Rainer Maria Rilke. The texts dominate the work's four movements and will be sung by baritone Gerald Finley and mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke. Thrillingly, Harbison has smuggled an electric guitar into the BSO to represent Orpheus's lyre. The second half of the programme features American pianist Jonathan Biss performing Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto - with nary a Stratocaster in sight.

bso.org

Biss: giving Boston Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto



BOSTON

Handel & Haydn Society

Handel *Messiah* (December 2-4) A Bach Christmas (December 15, 18)

It wouldn't be Christmas without a performance of Messiah. Many an orchestra in North America will be performing Handel's immortal oratorio, but for audiences in the New England area, the Handel and Haydn Society seems likely to be the best bet. This is an old-world musical society, now in its 197th season. Under the leadership of Harry Christophers, the Handel and Haydn Society present 'historically informed performances' using instruments and techniques current in the composer's era. In fact, it was this Society that was responsible for the American premiere of Handel's Messiah in 1815. Later in the month the Society will present A Bach Christmas, which has been built around the composer's prolific seasonal output, and includes Cantata 133 'In Thee I Do Rejoice' and his Christmas Oratorio. Using Bach as a springboard, the concert will also feature further period seasonal works from 17th and 18th composers from Bolivia, Mexico and Ukraine.

handelandhaydn.org



losefowicz-







SEATTLE

Seattle Symphony Orchestra

The Hard Nut (December 1-4)

Classic seasonal fun with The Nutcracker. Not guite. In Mark Morris's hands some of the warm glow of yesteryear turns to neon with a very different retro take on The Nutcracker. Morris updated the Balanchine classic by banishing the Sugar Plum Fairy, and mixing up sincerity with satire in *The Hard Nut*. Heresy, some may say. And yet, Morris's piece has just celebrated its 20th birthday, so irreverence also has a place at the table. This audacious production, presented by the Seattle Symphony in collaboration with the Seattle Theatre Group, may be raucous and camp but it's typically a big hit with audiences. The show features the stark, black-and-white art of American cartoonist Charles Burns, an avant-garde counterpoint to Tchaikovsky's beloved score.

seattlesymphony.org

SAN FRANCISCO San Francisco Symphony

Salonen Violin Concerto with Leila Josefowicz (December 8-10)

The violinist Leila Josefowicz, a former child prodigy, has made it her musical mission to bring new works for the violin to the concert hall. An ardent champion of contemporary composition, she joined forces with the composer (and former music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic) Esa-Pekka Salonen who wrote this violin concerto specially for her. They premiered the piece with the Los

Angeles Philharmonic in 2009 where it was a hit with both critics and crowds. Since then they have essentially been touring the US with the piece. Here is San Francisco's chance to hear the piece once described as 'pure, euphonic poetry'. Josefowicz, known for the intensity of her renditions, calls the piece her own personal violin adventure. It makes sense that the Helsinki-born Salonen opens the concert with *Pohjola's Daughter*, a musically opulent symphonic fantasy written in 1906 by his countryman Sibelius. The program closes with excerpts from Wagner's *Ring* cycle.

sfsymphony.org

CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA Severance Hall

Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony (December 8-10)

Marin Alsop makes her debut with the Cleveland Orchestra in December with an ambitious roster of works that starts all-American and ends with a blast of French romantic grandeur - in other words Camille Saint-Saëns's Symphony No 3 'avec orque'. It's more popularly known as the Organ Symphony, which is not entirely accurate as the composer uses the instrument in only two of its four movements. Still, when the organ does enter, the audience certainly knows it. It's also an opportunity for the multi-talented principal keyboard, Joela Jones, to shine on a symphonic scale when she delivers those chords in Severance Hall. The composer played the finished work to a frail Franz Liszt who had only months to live; and so the symphony's

dedication reads: 'To the memory of Franz Liszt.' This grandiose programme starts with an early work by Samuel Barber and also features Leonard Bernstein's five-movement 'violin concerto', *Serenade*, played by Cleveland concertmaster, Peter Otto.

clevelandorchestra.com

LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra Ravel, Adès, Tchaikovsky, Respighi

Ravel, Adès, Tchaikovsky, Respighi (December 10-11)

Jeffrey Kahane leads one of America's best chamber orchestras in a programme that, on the face of it, looks eclectic. But dig a little and you find coherence - the four works address 17th- and 18th-century musical sensibilities. Up first is Ravel's Le Tombeau de Couperin. Written between 1914 and 1917 it is also dedicated of his friends who died in the First World War. Contemporary British composer Thomas Adès is also fascinated by Couperin and has adapted three of his keyboard works for string ensembles, adding woodwinds and percussion to create Three Studies from Couperin. The internationally acclaimed cellist Ralph Kirschbaum joins the orchestra in a performance of Tchaikovsky's Variations on a Rococo Theme for Cello and Orchestra the closest the composer ever came to writing a cello concerto. And Respighi's Gli Uccelli is based on Baroque pieces imitating birds.

laco.org

Previews by Damian Fowler







BRAHMS, KAHANE & PROKOFIEV (NATASHA PAREMSKI: PIANO)

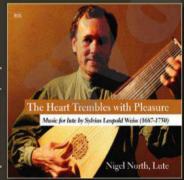
Arioso Classics 13]

Twenty-three-year-old Russian-American Natasha Paremski's debut recital recording is an expression of the artistic sensibility and flawless technique that have propelled her into a career well beyond her years!



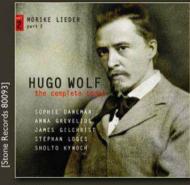
SATIE IMPROVISATIE (MICHAEL GEES: PIANO)

ImproviSatie is acclaimed pianist, composer and improviser Michael Gees' statement of music as an 'ex tempore' – art that always changes, never staying the same. In Gees' view, improvisation should not only be used with new pieces but also with existing masterpieces.



THE HEART TREMBLES WITH PLEASURE (NIGEL NORTH: LUTE)

2011 Gramophone Finalist in the Baroque Instrumental Category! Nigel North needs no introduction, with his career to date including recordings for several influential record labels.



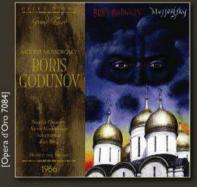
WOLF THE COMPLETE SONGS VOL. 2: MÖRIKE LIEDER 2

The second volume in a series that will comprise the complete songs of Hugo Wolf. Remarkably, this series will be the first complete edition of Wolf lieder, a considerable number of which remain unrecorded!



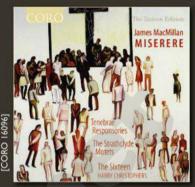
CONCERTO KÖLN THE CHRISTMAS ALBUM (CONCERTO KÖLN)

When the "musical beagles" of Concerto Köln sniff out the best seasonal pieces for a Christmas CD of popular Baroque repertoire from Corelli to Vivaldi and Bach, one can be confident that the results will always sound fresh and new.



MUSSORGSKY BORIS GODUNOY (GHIAUROY/YON KARAJAN: CND/YIENNA PHILHARMONIC)

This remarkable all-star cast includes one of the great basses of the 20th century, Nicolai Ghiaurov, as well as Russian tenor Alexei Maslennikov, soprano Sena Jurinac, and legendary conductor Herbert von Karajan, recorded live in Salzburg in 1966.



MACMILLAN MISERERE (CHRISTOPHERS: CND/THE SIXTEEN)

The CORO label is delighted to release the first recording of James MacMillan's 21st century take on the ancient Psalm 51, Miserere mei text.



A PASSION FOR PAVAROTTI: THE BARCELONA RECITAL (LIVE) (LUCIANO PAVAROTTI: TENOR)

One of Luciano Pavarotti's finest performances, recorded live in concert in the exciting, vibrant, and colorful Spanish city of Barcelona. A bonus CD featuring 20 unforgettable performances is included!



MOZART PIANO QUARTETS (RONAN O'HORA: PIANO/JONATHAN CARNEY: VIOLIN)

Internationally acclaimed artists Ronan O'Hora and Jonathan Carney present a splendid volume devoted to the piano quartets of Mozart.

BEST MUSIC BY THE BEST ARTISTS

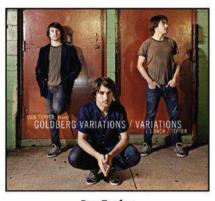


Stewart Goodyear Beethoven: The Late Sonatas

"He leaps the summit of the piano repertoire with complete success.

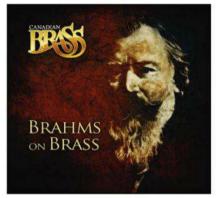
Performances have a thrilling energy, and brim with interpretive ideas
that seem to leap out of the speakers."

- David Patrick Stearns, Philadelphia Inquirier



Dan Tepfer Goldberg Variations / Variations

Tepfer takes a new approach to the music of J.S. Bach. He plays Bach's original variations as written while adding his own improvised variations in between each, generating a dialogue with the old master.



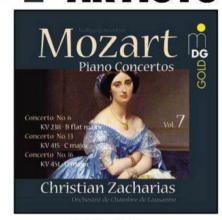
Canadian Brass Brahms on Brass

Each of the pieces performed on this CD expresses the powerful music of Brahms from an entirely new perspective.



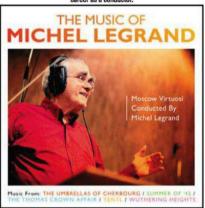
Matt Haimovitz & Christopher O'Riley Shuffle.Play.Listen

Shuffle.Play.Listen unites ground-breaking, Grammy-nominated cellist Matt Haimovitz with pianist Christopher O'Riley, famous for his piano tributes to Radiohead, in a collaboration that blurs the boundaries between classical and pop music.



Christian Zacharoas Mozart: Piano Concertos, Volume 7

Christian Zacharias established himself as one of the leading pianists of his generation, but in addition he has established a parallel career as a conductor.



Michel Legrand The Music of Michel Legrand

Michel Legrand re-visits some of his greatest successes in this newly recorded collection.

Wigmore Hall LIVE is the award winning label from London's legendary venue Wigmore Hall







Matthew Polanzani: Songs by Schubert, Beethoven, Britten and Hahn Christopher Maltman: Schubert: Winterreise

Alina Ibragimova: Beethoven: Violin Sonatas, Vol. 3

Available at



amazon.com

Reviews



Jed Distler reviews Franck and Strauss sonatas:

'Manoukian's tendency to play ever so slightly under pitch in louder, more sustained, passages is a real liability' > REVIEW ON PAGE XI



Donald Rosenberg reviews 'Sing Freedom!':

Everything on this disc is bound to rivet you to your seat, when you're not grooving on the outpouring of choral joy' REVIEW ON PAGE XIII

Aldridge

Florentine Opera Chorus; Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra / William Boggs

Naxos American Opera Classics © ② 8 669032/3 (142' • DDD • T)



Aldridge's opera on Sinclair Lewis's novel arrives on disc

There's nothing new about religious themes in American opera – Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* has had a particularly good run – or about interpreting what this may say about the US. Given that Sinclair Lewis's original 1925 novel, one of the great American tomes of religious scepticism, was banned in Boston at the time, it's strangely appropriate that the opera *Elmer Gantry* should find greater life in Nashville and Milwaukee – cities supposedly in the religious hinterland – than in the more obvious operatic hot spots on either coast.

The success of *Elmer Gantry* isn't a tribute merely to the fact that composer Robert Aldridge and librettist Herschel Garfein have found an all-American story but that they've rendered it operatically in purely American terms. Gantry, the lusty college athleteturned-Protestant minister, as a virile baritone? Sharon, the itinerant evangelist and sometime love interest, as a mercurial mezzo-soprano? Eddie, the true-believing preacher, as a fiery and somewhat strident tenor? These character types are easily cast these days, yet one could hardly imagine more finely chiselled performances than those of Keith Phares, Patricia Risley or Frank Kelley respectively.

Operas with this kind of dramatic impact are usually called 'theatrically charged' but what hits hardest here are the parts that are specifically operatic. Garfein's text, by turns funny and poignant, weeds out Lewis's overgrown prose and clarifies the story. Aldridge's music invites without pandering, deftly shading emotions at every turn. Choruses erupt in school fight songs and gospel hymns with infectiously syncopated hand-clapping. The music is throughcomposed yet fully of a piece with its setting – 'charged' but without smacking of either musical theatre or operatic avant-garde.

It also differs notably from its source material. Whereas Lewis devoted himself primarily to puncturing religious hypocrisy, the opera ends literally in flames consuming believers and non-believers alike, in effect questioning the very idea of religion itself. Aldridge and Garfein have accomplished here what opera rarely achieves: taking a dated US cultural relic and making it relevant again. **Ken Smith**

Debussy · Ravel

'Live from the Marlboro Music Festival'

Debussy String Quartet, Op 10^a

Ravel String Quartet^b. Introduction and Allegro^c

'Joshua Smith fl 'Moran Katz cl 'Sivan Magen hp

'Benjamin Beilman, aJudy Kang, bSoovin Kim,

bJessica Lee, acJoseph Lin vns 'Luke Fleming,

aRichard O'Neill, bJonathan Vinocour vas

bSoo Bae, Marie-Elisabeth Hecker, aDavid Soyer vcs

Marlboro Music Society ® 80003 (64' • DDD)



Live recordings from the Marlboro Music Festival

It must have seemed a good idea to release three cornerstones of French chamber music that showcase the mix of old pros and young stars of the future in live performances from Marlboro's legendary summer Music Festival. Unfortunately, the quality of the music-making falls short of reasonable expectations for such a project.

Debussy's Quartet is sadly subfusc, distinguished only by Joseph Lin's spectral high B at the end of the fourth movement and, throughout, the generous stability and eloquent phrasing of David Soyer's cello. There is little impressionistic colouring in evidence; the *animé* section towards the end of the first movement, for example, offers little of the fluttering necessary if it's to evolve organically into the final lyrical passion. No room in the reading, either, for anything softer than a medium-loud *pp*.

Ravel's Quartet fares better. Led by Soovin Kim's radiant first violin, it has more of the varieties of light and shade, more of the hints of the composer's subterranean mind, that you expect in this repertoire. Accents are delivered more swiftly, and the quartet's musical temperature actually heats up as it should, although the resulting *fortes* are occasionally heavy-handed. Nor is there much sense of Ravel's wistful poetry. The







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Arvo Pärt's piano works range from his first public statement as a composer, the *Zwei Sonatinen*, to his latest, the life affirming miniature *Für Anna Maria*, recorded here for the first time. His music is now interpreted by acclaimed pianist and Steinway Artist Ralph van Raat.



PHOTOGRAPHY: MURTLA

Introduction and Allegro, recorded in 2010, works best, with harpist Sivan Magen and the two woodwind players giving forth some joyous sounds. It isn't enough, though, to raise this disc to more than a collector's item.

The sound throughout is a little rough and ready but the sense of live performances being captured is always apparent, as occasional audience noise is added to pages being turned and heavy breathing, and even humming from one or another of the players. The perfunctory booklet-notes do scant justice to the stature of the imposing 'Live from the Marlboro Music Festival' series title.

Laurence Vittes

Franck · Strauss

Franck Violin Sonata
Strauss Violin Sonata, Op 18
Catherine Manoukian vn Xiayin Wang pf
Marquis (M) MAR385 (59' • DDD)



A Strauss and Franck pairing calling for masterful technique

Richard Strauss's youthful Violin Sonata may be a little long-winded for the ideas it has to express, yet it's easy to hear why virtuoso violinists are attracted to its soaring melodies and energetic assurance. And Strauss makes equal demands on the pianist's technique and endurance. Although violinist Catherine Manoukian and pianist Xiayin Wang are attuned to each other with regard to sudden dynamic shifts and impeccably calibrated rubato, they underplay the music's soaring energy and heroic dimensions. More significantly, Manoukian's intonation hits and misses, especially with regard to held notes above the staff and wide interval leaps. Her tone doesn't quite match the lyric robustness and sustaining power that Kyung-Wha Chung conveys in her more detailed and darker-lit DG collaboration with Krystian Zimerman. The central movement is the most convincing, thanks to the finely tuned interaction between violinist and pianist and a brisk basic tempo.

Similar criticisms apply to the Franck Sonata, where Manoukian's tendency to play ever so slightly under pitch in louder, more sustained passages is a real liability, especially in the outer movements. To her credit, though, she finds her centre in the second-movement *Allegro*, where her penetrating tone in the lower strings and ardent octaves stand out beside Wang's discreetly pedalled, clearly delineated traversal of the whirling piano part.

The close-up microphone placement is a tad too intimate and dry for my taste, yet the recording is well balanced. **Jed Distler**



McKinley

String Quartets - No 4; No 5; No 6

Martinů Quartet

Navona (F) NV5855 (68' • DDD)



Prague's Martinů Quartet in works they commissioned

Though they score points for full disclosure, the booklet-notes for Indiana-based composer Elliott Miles McKinley's string quartets do his music little credit by referring so often to jazz. True, McKinley studied jazz, and stylistic rhythms do surface, but the 'jazziness' is so thoroughly digested as to make the label meaningless. For those who embrace or reject music on that basis alone, McKinley is sure to disappoint. And that would be a shame, because it is equally well grounded in the string quartet tradition, the influences of Beethoven, Bartók, Shostakovich and others being conveyed by a subtle and distinctive voice. The pieces here, each commissioned by the Prague-based Martinů Quartet, reveal a comfortable relationship both with the ensemble and the form.

String Quartet No 4 (2001) is the 'jazziest', sometimes lyrically generous and expansive, at others syncopated and propulsive.

Quartet No 5 (2005) is far more eclectic – not simply stylistically, in the manner of McKinley's teacher William Bolcom, but also in its emotional landscape. Its three unequal parts (subdivided into 12 sections) unfold without pause, as a Ragtime and Tango mix with more descriptive titles to trace an emotional arch from youth to adulthood to (at the very least) middle age. Structurally, Quartet

No 6 (2010) returns to more traditional ground, although McKinley's ability to weave a waltz and a Chaconne into the same musical cloth yields even stronger narrative coherence. This music begs for repeated hearings – first the music alone, then with the scores in hand (they're included with the interactive CD). Altogether, an impressive package. **Ken Smith**

Mendelssohn

Piano Trios - No 1, Op 49; No 2, Op 66. Song Without Words, Op 53 No 2 **Argenta Trio**

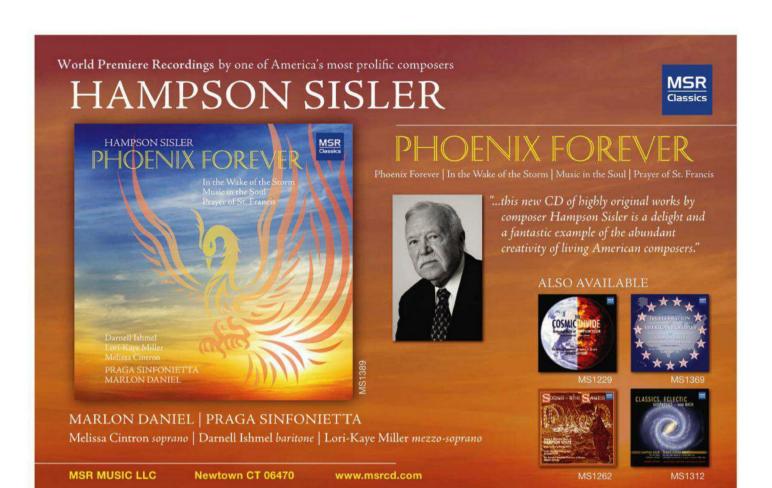
Bridge (F) BRIDGE9338 (61' • DDD)



Mendelssohn taped on campus by the resident trio

Here we have yet another casual reminder of just how substantially North American higher education supports the arts - a seemingly innocuous release of the two Mendelssohn trios, plus a lovely addition to the repertoire in the form of an encore for piano trio. In residence at the University of Nevada, Reno, where divorce used to be all the rage, the Argenta Trio deliver performances of seamless ensemble, always perfectly in tune. Their light romantic touch, in which bows and hammers never more than stroke the strings, send the music floating off magically into the superb ambient space of Green Music Center at Sonoma State University, 50 miles north of San Francisco.

As good and homogeneously and collaboratively as the Argenta Trio play, it is violinist Stephanie Sant'Ambrogio who most often takes your breath away, both with the rhythmic and spatial dimensionality that she







allows the music's flow, and for the sweet tone of her 1757 JB Guadagnini. Known for two serious CDs with fanciful titles, 'Alone' and 'Late Dates with Mozart', Sant'Ambrogio is one of those artists who reminds you of just how filled with light a piece of music can be.

These players' approach is especially successful in the C minor Trio, with its longer phrases (like the extraordinary opening bars) and more complex (for Mendelssohn) emotional state. They get it particularly right in the *Andante espressivo*, which is reminiscent of the great Heifetz-Piatigorsky recording where the inseparable friends made the purest of sounds, allowing themselves and the music an interlude of beauty that is beyond ego.

The Song Without Words, which the Trio play in Hans Sitt's arrangement, is all that we think of when Mendelssohn comes to mind. As Jeffrey Sykes says in his enjoyable booklet-notes, 'the slow movements of the trios themselves are songs without words in all but name'. Laurence Vittes

Mozart

Mozart Concerto for Two Pianos, K365. Sonata for Two Pianos, K448. Adagio and Fugue, K546/K426. Larghetto and Allegro in E flat Joshua Pierce, Dorothy Jonas ρfs Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra / Paul Freeman MSR Classics (M MS1390 (64' • DDD)



Mozart 'doubles' from Pierce and Jonas

Mozart composed less than a handful of pieces for two pianos, starting with the concerto he performed with his older sister, Nannerl. He also wrote a sonata (a seminal piece in the duo-piano repertory) and an Adagio and Fugue that were composed at different times but later paired.

Pianists Pierce and Jonas end their recording of the Mozart works for two pianos with a curiosity: a searching Larghetto followed by a sprightly Allegro that Mozart left incomplete but which others finished. The version on this disc melds careful editing by Pierce with bits of completions by Franz Beyer and Paul Badura-Skoda. The result is a cohesive and stylish tribute to Mozart.

The Concerto K365 receives a delightful treatment as Pierce and Jonas interact with seamless vibrancy. The pianists apply fine rhythmic propulsion to the quick outer movements, passing lines deftly from one to the other, knowing exactly when to predominate and when to lend support. In the slow movement, they're keenly sensitive to the music's serene beauty, and conductor Paul Freeman and the Slovak Philharmonic

Orchestra are elegant colleagues. Something of an acoustical jolt occurs between the ambience of the live concerto performance in Bratislava and the studio environment at SUNY Purchase, where the other pieces were recorded. What was slightly distant in the concerto becomes crystal-clear in the music for two pianos alone. Pierce and Jonas are as assured, refined and articulate in these intimate scores as they are in the grander orchestral world. **Donald Rosenberg**

'Sing Freedom!'

Traditional Ain'-a that good news!. Been in de storm/Wayfaring Stranger. A city called Heaven. Hard Trials. Hold on!. Freedom Song. I got a home in-a dat rock. Lily of the valley. Motherless Child. My God is a rock. Oh graveyard (lay this body down). Plenty good room (on the glory train). Soon ah will be done. Soon ah will be done/I wanna die easy. Steal away. Swing low, sweet chariot. Walk together, children



Texas choir Conspirare turn from Howells to spirituals

Church choirs, especially in African American parishes, tend to transport listeners to another world when they sink their voices into those songs of suffering and praise known as spirituals. In many cases, so do professional choruses such as Conspirare, which transfixes you in this new recording.

Based in Austin, Texas, Conspirare devotes most of its time to classical repertoire. Here, artistic director Craig Hella Johnson and his Company of Voices apply the same expressive depth and technical sophistication to a treasure trove of spirituals in old and new arrangements by such diverse figures as Moses Hogan, William Dawson, Leonard De Paur, David Lang, Tarik O'Regan and Sir Michael Tippett. The disc also introduces stirring original works by Robert Kyr ('Freedom Song', a bold chant with drums) and Kirby Shaw (the exultant 'Plenty good room (on the glory train)').

As shaped by Johnson, the performances capture the urgent and plaintive power that makes these pieces so moving. The passages of quiet intensity are sung at a hush, but with every harmony and phrase clearly delineated. When the music requires stentorian attack, the singers come close to blowing the roof off whatever space you happen to inhabit, while never losing tonal focus.

The episode at the end of 'Walk together, children' when the women swoop upward and the men make a matching descent is something magnificent to behold. But

everything on this disc is bound to rivet you to your seat, when you're not grooving on the outpouring of choral joy. **Donald Rosenberg**

'The Queen: Music for Elizabeth I'

Anonymous Lord Willoughby. Essex Last Goodnight. When dasies pied. Ring out your bels.

Nuttmigs and Ginger. In Eighty-eight Bennet All creatures now Byrd The Queenes Alman Campion Wooe her and win her. Where are all thy beauties now? Corkine Each lovely grace Dowland/Allison Time stands still. The Lady Frances Sidneys Almayne Dowland His golden locks. Say love if ever thou didst find. Can she excuse my wrongs Van Eyck Courant, of harte diefje waerom zoo stil Johnson The Queenes Treble Morley O Mistris mine. The Sacred End Pavin. Fly Love Pilkington With fragrant flowers Tomkins See, see the shepheards queene

Toronto Consort / David Fallis Marquis M MARQUIS81387 (64' • DDD)



Tributes to Elizabeth I from Fallis's Toronto ensemble

All hail 'The Queen', the newest recording from the Toronto Consort, which pays alluring tribute to Elizabeth I in pieces she inspired, enjoyed and possibly even played. The repertoire is varied and rich, full of love ballads, patriotic songs and witty tunes rubbing shoulders with elegant instrumental pieces.

Her Majesty had the privilege of living during the rich artistic period when Shakespeare and Marlowe conjured theatrical gold, and composers such as Dowland, Campion and Morley were part of the royal circle. Those composers are represented here, as are others of less renown, along with the most prolific figure of all time, Anonymous. Their creations salute the Queen and document famous events of the time, including the woeful tale of the Earl of Essex.

Among the pieces that must have tickled Elizabeth is 'When dasies pied', a lilting narrative for soprano and echoing cuckoo. The 43rd year of the queen's reign is marked in the jaunty 'Ring out your bels', while all manner of tender and animated works associated in some way with Elizabeth are part of the delectable menu.

As led by its artistic director, David Fallis, the Toronto Consort lavishes luminous clarity, lightness and vitality on the music. The singers bring crisp enunciation to the texts and are not afraid to highlight the lusty qualities in several of the selections. Amid the songs, the period instrumentalists evoke delicate and rousing sounds that the queen, in all probability, would have relished.

Donald Rosenberg

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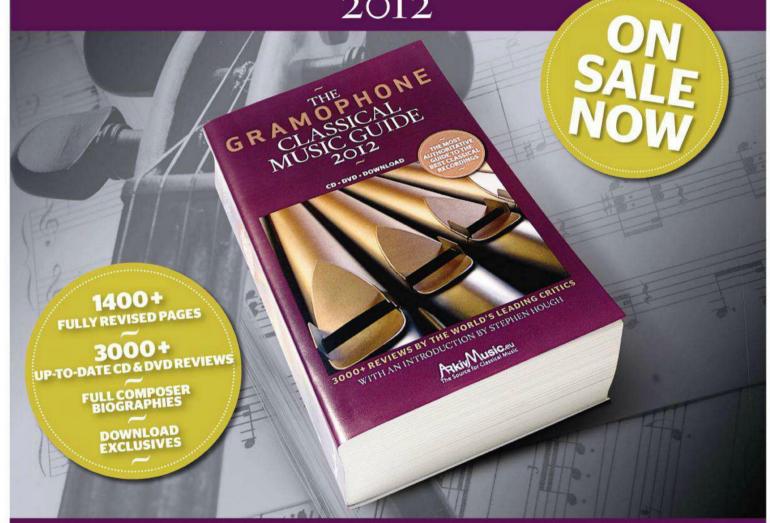
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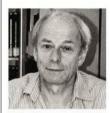
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THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



Leading music writer and lecturer **RICHARD WIGMORE** was as surprised as anyone by what he found on his in-depth Vivaldi quest for this issue. 'Intensive immersion in Vivaldi, on disc and in the archives in Turin, has led not to narcolepsy, as I'd halffeared,' he says, 'but renewed delight and astonishment at his inventive vigour.'



For **FABRICE FITCH**, reviewer, musicologist and composer, this edition brought an assignment any early music specialist would relish. 'Meeting the charismatic viol player, conductor, director and softly spoken controversialist Jordi Savall at his home near Barcelona – not a bad summer assignment!' he says, of profiling Savall to mark his 70th birthday.



ROB COWAN is not only one of the UK's best-known authorities on music (as a Radio 3 presenter) and Gramophone's contributing editor, he is also a Bartók fanatic. So when a superb new recording featuring James Ehnes playing the violin and viola concertos turned up for review, he didn't hesitate to recommend it for Recording of the Month.



GRAMOPHONE Editorial

Founded in 1923 by Sir Compton Mackenzie and Christopher Stone as 'an organ of candid opinion for the numerous possessors of gramophones'

Reviews and reviewers. front and centre



Since Sir Compton Mackenzie first conceived the idea of this magazine, it has changed its look many times. Yet it has always remained true to the principles he set out in his first editorial (quoted above in each issue): 'an organ of candid opinion for the numerous possessors of gramophones'.

This latest design, not so very far from the one you're used to, cleaves even more closely to that vision. Our esteemed panel of reviewers are even more central (indeed,

in this issue there are more reviews than before) and they have a new mark of distinction in their armoury. Editor's Choice, the accolade we bestow on the finest discs every month, is now Gramophone Choice - but any critic who feels strongly that a recording shouldn't have missed the cut can now award it a Critic's Choice badge. But they have a limited number to issue each year, so must choose with care – and passion!

The reviews themselves are set out so that they can run to greater length if needed, with the Recording of the Month given a full two pages (something Rob Cowan seizes gratefully for this issue, not least because the disc in question features a favourite composer). And in a new feature, 'The Specialist's Guide To...', reviewers recommend an essential library of recordings for their niche areas of interest beginning with Richard Fairman on rare French operas. It's a mustread for those of us who enjoy becoming anoraks in out-of-the-way

'Jordi Savall, that pioneer of early music, turns 70. His painstakingly researched concept albums have influenced the entire industry'

subjects. You'll notice throughout a more literary feel to the features, as Gramophone is a home of great writing about music. But we also hope they are more sharply defined - so our interview slot 'A Conversation With...', for instance, gives way to 'The Musician And The Score', in which a leading player shares his or her understanding of specific works (starting with the Emerson Quartet's ever-eloquent cellist David Finckel discussing Mozart's Prussian Quartets).

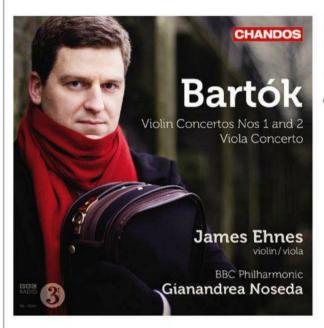
We also celebrate two important milestones in this issue. Jordi Savall, that pioneer of early music, turns 70. His ultra-lavish, painstakingly researched concept albums have, arguably, influenced the entire industry and, in a fascinating interview with Fabrice Fitch, he reveals the process of their creation. And there's research in Turin as Richard Wigmore visits the home of the immense Naïve Vivaldi project, a decade in and at its halfway point.

james.inverne@haymarket.com

November 2011

GRAMOPHONE Choice

Informed by our unrivalled panel of critics, we choose the month's twelve must-hear recordings





G Recording of the Month

'The kernel of the unfinished Viola Concerto is its slow movement and I challenge any reader to name a version that is either more moving or more beautifully played'

FOR THE FULL REVIEW BY ROB COWAN, TURN TO PAGE 40



Hear every Gramophone Choice recording, including Recording of the Month, through the online Gramophone Player at gramophone.co.uk



'The great cinemascopic vistas that are summoned up by those eight unison horns at the start are remarkable for their depth, breadth and thunderous immediacy...'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 48



'Hats off to the Royal Concertgebouw. This crowns what is without doubt the most impressive recorded restrospective of any orchestra ever undertaken on disc.'

• REVIEW ON PAGE 54



'Individual character comes first. The Minuet is forcefully played. Constanze, who was having their first baby, thought some passages suggested birth pangs. But the Trio is solicitous.'

▶ REVIEW ON PAGE 62



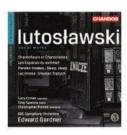
'Lorraine Hunt Lieberson never recorded this in the studio. She rivals the famous recordings by Régine Crespin and Janet Baker. Her "La spectre de la rose" is mesmeric.'

• REVIEW ON PAGE 74



not for the faint-hearted either in terms of its enormous scale or its spectrum of powerful, visionary espression. The impact is overwhelming.'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 75



'These gemlike, at times distinctly Ravelian settings make an enchantingly varied and witty sequence... and Les espaces du sommeil is an infinitely absorbing masterwork...'





Cardinall's Musick prolong the opening and the effect of those bars seems to me entirely different. It's worth buying this disc just for this object lesson in word-setting.'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 81





'There is something enchanting about this disc. The tradition has largely died out, but here a good many thoroughly appealing examples are resurrected.'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 87

work...
Terradellas has a great gift of melody. his tunes fall easily on the ear, but he is capable of real depth of expression. The performance is the thing – unmissable.'

'A splendid

► REVIEW ON PAGE 93



DVD

'Anja Silja delivers a performance every bit as concentrated as her Sentas, Leonores and Emilia Martys. It's quite frightening when she rises from her death bed...'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 93



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'Archipel's live mono recording hails from Chicago (the CSO, naturally) with Rysanek, Resnik, Lloyd and Tozzi. This live version piles on the tension.'

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THE GRAMOPHONE COLLECTION

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Jeremy Nicholas searches for the finest recording of Liszt's benchmark organ work, the *Ad nos* Fantasy and Fugue

GRAMOPHONE Features

November 2011

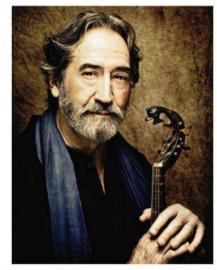
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Robert Winston on the links between science and music

Paganini's Daemon



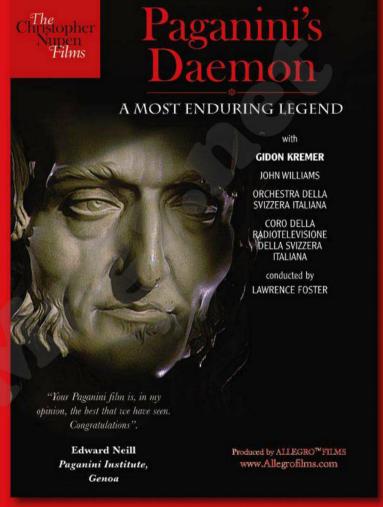
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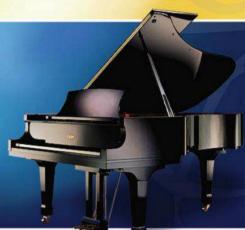


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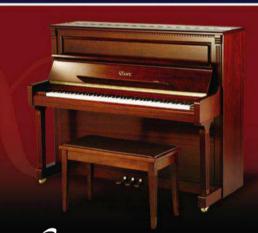
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ONLINE FEATURES



Martin Cullingford reports from Venice, where harpsichordist and conductor Christophe Rousset led a thrilling evening of 19th-century operatic arias sung by soprano Véronique Gens. He talks to Rousset about this, the third in the 'Tragédiennes' series on Virgin, and about Les Talens Lyriques' 20th anniversary.

BLOGS



Conductor Mark Wigglesworth explores the philosophies and psychologies behind music.



Our audio editor Andrew Everard offers his expert opinion on the latest changes in audio equipment.

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IN THE BEGINNIN CHOIR OF MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD



Peter Phillips, Benjamin Nicholas directors of music Natasha Tyrwhitt-Drake organ scholar

Founded as recently as 2008, the new Choir of Merton College, Oxford is rapidly emerging as a major force in collegiate choral music. On this their debut recording, the choir's two directors helm a diverse programme Bookended by two pieces titled In the Beginning - Gabriel Jackson's ravishing version of the rarely-set Johannine Prologue, Copland's glowing account of the first seven days of creation - this disc offers a themed sequence of Renaissance and modern classics, all captured in sumptuous sound in the radiant acoustics of Merton's famous chapel

'A stunning recording debut, and a choir to keep an eye and ear on. - BBC Review



DCD34095

Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge

Geoffrey Webber director Matthew Fletcher and Annie Lydford organ

In the first recording devoted entirely to Judith Weir's choral music, the Choir of Gonville & Caius explores her evolving relationship with the medium, from her earliest liturgical commission to the most recent, which was premièred in 2009. Also included in this comprehensive collection are several secular pieces and her two organ works, which are now established classics of the repertoire. The athleticism intensity and clarity that are hallmarks of the choir's singing are ideally suited to Weir's strikingly original, approachable

'glittering precision ... marvellous choral sheen' International Record Review, June 2009



National Youth Choir of Great Britain Mike Brewer conductor

East meets West on this new recording as two great singing traditions are brought together, to thrilling effect Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the three Baltic states have emerged as powerhouses of choral innovation and imagination. Mike Brewer and the NYCGB bring all their customary fervour and virtuosity to bear on this programme of masterworks from three of Europe's smallest, yet musically richest, countries

'Under Mike Brewer's expert direction, the young voices of the National Youth Choir make properly massive impact - Sunday Times, October 2008



The Okavango Macbeth

cCall Smith libretto, Tom Cunningham music, Mr McFall's Chamber

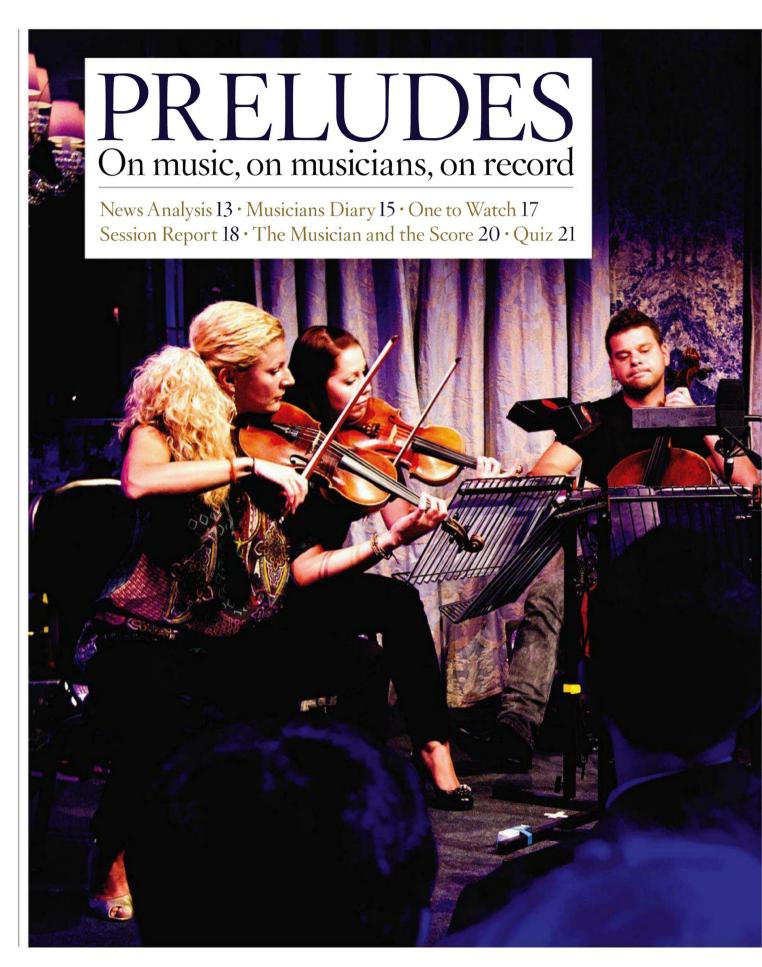
Set in the Okavango Delta in northern Botswana, The Okavango Macbeth deals with the efforts of an ambitious female baboon, Lady Macbeth, to encourage her husband, Macbeth, to murder the dominant baboon, Duncan The response to the opera's premiere in the No 1 Ladies' Opera House, led many to conclude that in this extraordinary and unusual tale a new operatic gem has emerged.

'McCall Smith's succinct libretto is spun by composer Tom Cunningham into gorgeous tuneful melodies that linger' — The Scotsman, 23 April, 2011 FIVE STARS

Delphian Records Ltd, 34 Wallace Avenue, Wallyford, EAST LOTHIAN, EH21 8BZ



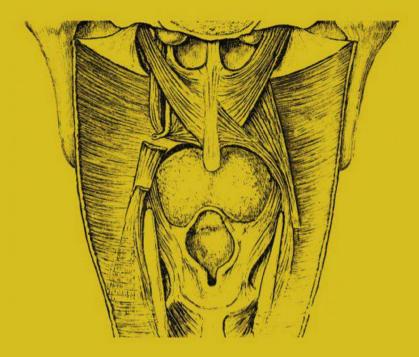








gramophone.co.uk GRAMOPHONE NOVEMBER 2011 11



Pranayama (prānāyāma): is a Sanskrit word meaning "extension of the prana or breath" or more accurately, "extension of the life force". The word is composed of two Sanskrit words, Prāna, life force, or vital energy, particularly, the breath, and "āyāma", to extend, draw out, restrain, or control.

The basis of a *beautiful tone* lies in proper flute breath *control*. The breath is the most important element of flute playing. Without it, you have nothing. Breathing is crucial for learning how to master the flute. Breathing to play the flute is totally different from normal breathing. You must breathe in quickly, taking in a large amount of air. Then you exhale the air over a sustained period of time, pushing it out with your abdominal muscles. Of course, while certain members of the orchestra need to master this; others hold their breath in pure anticipation of the final recording and its ability to *take ones breath away*.



CLAUDIO ABBADO MOZART

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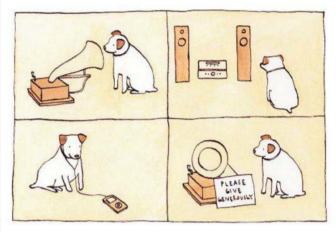
Abbado continues his devotion to 18th-century repertoire with the second of three albums of Mozart's wondrous wind compositions.

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'Can copyright extension come to the aid of the majors?'



he change in European copyright law, ratified by the EU Council of Ministers in Brussels on September 12, has some interesting side effects for classical music lovers. It was lobbied for hard to protect (primarily pop) artists with careers that started 50 years ago, such as The Beatles, Tom Jones, Roger Daltrey and Sir Cliff Richard (who spearheaded the petition for the law's extension). In essence, the performers and producers of musical works will now be protected by copyright law for an additional 20 years – up from 50 to 70 years. This change in the law will now have to be adopted in EU member states within two years.

Recordings from the period just out of copyright (currently up to 1960) have been well served by companies such as Naxos, Pristine Classical, Regis and others. The big question is whether the majors (who usually own the mastertapes) will take the stewardship of their back catalogues seriously and actively promote the gems they hold. Otherwise there is a very real risk that important recordings will simply disappear from sight for another 20 years. It's one thing to be granted an extension to copyright protection, but it's something else to make the most of that opportunity. There will, it seems, be a provision for 'use it or lose it'; in other words, the right for third parties to reissue if the originator does nothing with a recording.

Klaus Heymann, Naxos's founder, believes that 'the majors will keep available or make available recordings they think will make money or will at least recoup the investment in resurrecting them. All others will either be recovered by the artists or their heirs who, in most cases, will not have the money to pay for restorations/ transfers; or third parties will make them available.'

Chaz Jenkins, head of LSO Live, however, points out that 'the conductors may have passed away but many of the musicians from the orchestras are still alive and trying to survive on modest pensions. Meanwhile, archive labels exploit their work without paying them a penny. The potential benefit of term extension to such musicians individually may be modest in comparison to The Beatles and Sir Cliff, but relative to their pension pot it may prove far more significant.'

With people living to a greater age, the 50-year duration is no longer such a guarantee of protection and reward; let's hope the record companies can find a middle ground, allowing musicians to be rewarded, and music lovers to gain access to the great recordings of the early 1960s easily and competitively.

'There is a very real risk that important recordings will simply disappear for another 20 years'

ver in the United States, the Philadelphia Orchestra – which filed for bankruptcy in the spring (despite an endowment worth, in 2009, \$129m) – may well be on the road to reaching an agreement with its musicians that will ensure near business as usual in the 2011-12 season. The magnitude of the sums involved does highlight the differences between orchestras on each side of the Atlantic. Most European ensembles operate on far smaller budgets, though they have the guarantee (usually) of at least a decent measure of public funding. So where might the Philadelphians look for longer-term salvation? Recent LA history has shown the revitalising powers of a young, sparky new conductor. The Philadelphians will be hoping that the imminent arrival of Yannick Nézet-Séguin will give their balance sheets a shot in the arm. **6**

Specialist Classical Chart The UK's best-selling pure classical releases

- (New) 'Italia'
 Nicola Benedetti; SCO / Curnyn Decca
- 6 (New) Anna Netrebko 'Live at the Met' Anna Netrebko; Metropolitan Opera DG
- 2 (New) McCartney Ocean's Kingdom London Classical Orch Decca
- 7 (New) Reich WTC 9/11 Kronos Quartet Nonesuch
- (1) Liszt 'My Piano Hero' Lang Lang Sony
- (5) **Delius String Concertos**Tasmin Little; Paul Watkins Chandos
- (2) 'Miloš The Guitar' Miloš Karadaglić DG
- 9 (9) Ireland Piano Concerto John Lenehan; RLPO / Wilson Naxos
- (3) Shostakovich Symphonies 6 & 12 RLPO / Petrenko *Naxos*
- (4) Fauré Chamber Music for Strings & Piano Capuçons; Quatuor Ebène Virgin



Chart for week ending October 8 (previous week's position in brackets). Visit gramophone.co.uk for weekly updates of the chart, along with reviews

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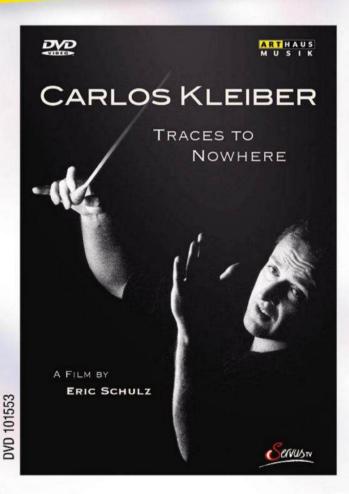


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CARLOS KLEIBER

TRACES TO NOWHERE

A Film by ERIC SCHULZ

With Plácido Domingo, Brigitte Fassbaender, Otto Schenk, Veronika Kleiber, Michael Gielen, Manfred Honeck...

On the 11th July 2004 Carlos Kleiber got into his car and drove from Munich, via the Alps, to his holiday home in the remote Slovenian village of Konjsica. There he wrote a final letter to a friend in which he bid farewell to the world. A short time later the conductor, increasingly plagued by illness and suffering, was found dead.

This documentary represents the first film dedicated to the enigmatic personality of the conductor. It follows in the traces of Kleiber's final journey and, by means of the recollections of friends and other companions - including the first and only interview with his sister Veronika - portrays a man as renowned for his difficult personality as his brilliant work.

"What he left us is that tremendous emptiness of losing a friend, and a genius."

Plácido Domingo



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Of road trips, hikes and practice

The ambient sounds of a US road trip cause *Hilary Habn* to reflect on how people listen

or a road trip I'm taking across the States with a few nature hikes thrown in – during which I'll still need to practise – I've ordered a battery-operated electric violin. I thought it would be more indestructible than a handmade instrument while still giving me something of the right dimensions to practise on and help me keep up my strength. The package arrived in the mail today. It weighed almost nothing. The violin came in its own structured cardboard box within the shipping box, while the (wooden) bridge was in a Ziploc baggie. The carbon-fibre bow I ordered as an extra came in nothing more substantial than a little plastic sleeve that floated loose in the packing material.

We'll see how the whole thing works in due course. It's all part of a grand ongoing experiment I'm conducting to see what I can do to stay in shape and preserve my classical violins and go out and commune with nature and maintain my practice levels. No one else will be able to hear me, but at least I'll be playing.

Modern-day transport noises are layering over thoughts of the music I'll be performing in a few hours'

My 2011-12 concert season has officially started. It's back to the proverbial grindstone for me, although my work is hardly tedious.

I'm now on a train I almost didn't make. Wind screams through a door, bells clank, and I can hear the wheels hitting the joints in the rails. I have plenty of time and I've built a practice buffer zone into my itinerary. I'm on my way to NPR (National Public Radio) to record a concert to be broadcast at the time of the release of my next album: the four sonatas for violin and piano by Charles Ives. Modernday transport noises are layering over thoughts of the music I'll be performing in a few hours. Bach, of course, plus snippets of American folk melodies that show up in the secular-seeming Ives sonatas, such as, 'Shall we gather at the river', 'Jesus loves me', 'Battle cry of freedom' and 'Come thou fount of every blessing'. I kind of enjoy this part of an album's life, when it hasn't yet been released but there's little more I can do to help the recording itself: I get to talk about the pieces in a low-pressure way and I'm also looking into the unknown.

I've been thinking about how people listen. I think the context must be influential: the music that one grew up hearing, what the familiar patterns are, what inflections are pleasant to each person's ears and how much ownership they feel over what they're listening to. Yesterday, I wound up playing a command performance for a group of Afghani visitors to the United States; they're part of a think-tank on tour to various cities. We were all in the same place at the same time and when I was introduced they asked me to play something for them. Thinking this circumstance may never recur, I gave a performance



Playing the Ives sonatas in a Tiny Desk concert at NPR



The interior box my new electric violin came in



Train ride: I could hear wind screaming and bells clanking



A passenger who was shouting



With some Afghani visitors, a conversation with his colleague who seemed to enjoy my Bach

right there in the hallway - two movements of Bach. They seemed really to enjoy it. I'm curious about what they listened for - not because they're from another country, but because they're different from me. One of them, I know, is studying an instrument back home. Was this combination of sounds new? Did it bring back fond memories? Was this music logical or mysterious?

Most of the time, I experience music as a musician. Out of sheer interest, I can't help but dissect what I hear: the performance, the piece, the delivery. It's the auto mode my mind goes into. Occasionally, though, when I've been on vacation for long enough, I can hear sound as sensation instead of notes. The first time was two years ago, when I turned on the car radio while running errands at the end of a lengthy break from touring. It was a revelation. Magic. @

To read Gramophone's review of Hilary Hahn's Ives Sonatas, turn to page 71

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Practitioners of the craft of private banking







SESSION REPORT The Sixteen

Work: James MacMillan: Miserere (premiere recording) and other works

Artists: The Sixteen / Harry Christophers

Date: January 19-21, 2011 Venue: St Giles' Cripplegate, London Engineer: Mike Hatch

Producer: Mark Brown | Session Time: 10.30am-5.30pm | Words: Peter Quantrill

n a cold and windy January afternoon, the members of The Sixteen hunch against the wind as they leave the church of St Giles' Cripplegate. The church may have survived the Great Fire of London to nestle within its brick Barbican fastness, but the stone walls still rattle in premonition of 'the Thunder, Wing'd with red Lightning and impetuous rage' once summoned by the crypt's most noted inhabitant, John Milton. Clouds gather overhead while, inside, producer Mark Brown attempts to confine the stygian gloom to the music, as he contemplates the post-production work that will be needed on Coro's album of motets by James MacMillan. 'Difficult music!' notes Brown. 'It's extraordinarily emotional, and it needs a great deal of passion. But the problem is the building. Sessions with Harry are less taxing for me than solo voices. He has a good team – internal tuning is very rarely out. And one is among friends.'

While acquiescing in its quirks – 'the heating makes little clicks, which sound like a chisel a mile away, so we had to turn it off' – director Harry Christophers prefers St Giles for recordings of modern repertoire. 'Our engineer Mike Hatch says the acoustic doesn't have much of a tail on it, but I don't want a wash of sound in this repertoire. In St Giles' you can hear everything, and when you have two to a part as we do in the Responsories, you don't want the singers to feel isolated.'

MacMillan hasn't attended the sessions, but his association with The Sixteen stretches back a decade to *O Bone Jesu*, the choir's first

'People adore the Allegri, perhaps because it's so simple, but I am so pleased to have this from Jimmy'—Harry Christophers

liturgical commission. If MacMillan's version of that particular work calls to mind that by Robert Carver, MacMillan's 16th-century countryman – 'the two most significant Scottish composers of liturgical music,' says Christophers – then his new *Miserere* takes a more adventurously graphic journey through that most penitential of psalms than its best-known setting does. This one, though, also features a high soprano solo, sung with astonishing assurance by Elin Manahan Thomas, and I think that Signor Allegri casts a fleeting shadow halfway through. 'People adore the Allegri, perhaps because it's simple,' says Christophers, 'but I am so pleased to have this from Jimmy – I find it heart-rending in fact.'

The still greater technical challenges (and musical rewards, for this listener at any rate) of the *Tenebrae Responsories* bear out the enthusiasm of conductor and producer for their work. Writing originally for the Glasgow-based ensemble Cappella Nova,







- 1. St Giles' Cripplegate: the 'stygian gloom' is not enough to dampen the spirits of The Sixteen under Harry Christophers
- 2. Acoustics: microphones capture St Giles' unusual sound: it 'doesn't have much of a tail on it' but is to Christophers's taste
- 3. Day job: Christophers relishes the 10.30am to 5 30nm sessions in live recordings 'personalities can take over
- 4. Narrative: 'When Jimmy writes a big piece, he doesn't lose his way,' says Christophers, guiding his singers along the path

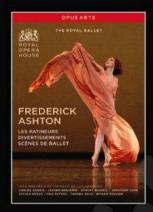
MacMillan chose just three texts from the 18 available, evoking the agony of Good Friday with drones, refrains and cries, which for Christophers bring a wild, Moorish flavour to the music - Iberian polyphony with the gloves off. Brown agrees: 'The thing about great music - and I honestly think Jimmy's music is great music - is that it's easier, because you want to do it better, because you care more.' Adds Christophers: 'When Jimmy writes a big piece, he doesn't lose his way, unlike his contemporaries. And he knows how to write for voices.' Christophers holds MacMillan in the same regard as Victoria and Poulenc, for the depths of the composer's personal response to a text like the Seven Last Words - a large-scale cycle from 1994 which features among Coro's release plans.

Over three decades of recording, Christophers admits he has changed tack. 'Some of our early recordings for Hyperion were a bit cavalier, then along came Virgin and Collins, when one was striving for perfection, and engineers knew they could do amazing things, and we got sucked up in that. But you need the odd rough edge on a CD. We're performing this music, and as long as I know where we're taking the music, and the choir know where I'm going, we leave it.' But he still values the opportunity for second thoughts. 'Recording live captures the energy of the occasion, but the speeds can go awry and personalities can take over. This way, we rehearse and record, 10.30 to 5.30 - it's a day job!' @

▶ To read Gramophone's review, turn to page 79

OPUS ARTE

NEW RELEASES



LES PATINEURS DIVERTISSEMENTS SCÈNES DE BALLET Frederick Ashton

Founder choreographer of The Royal Ballet, Frederick Ashton created more than 100 ballets over a 60 year career. Showcasing three of his shorter works, this disc reflects the breadth of his sophisticated, elegant and widely popular style.



THE RAKE'S PROGRESS Stravinsky

In this celebrated Glyndebourne Festival production, David Hockney's designs reinterpret the Hogarth etchings that inspired the opera's libretto. Music Director Vladimir Jurwoski conducts a renowned cast which includes Topi Lehtipuu, Miah Persson and Matthew Rose.



ADRIANO IN SIRIA Pergolesi

For the festivities marking the Pergolesi's tercentenary in his native Jesi, Ignacio García created a new staging of the imperial drama Adriano in Siria. A fine Italian cast and the distinguished Accademia Bizantina are led by the Accademia's director, Ottavio Dantone.

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Mozart's Prussian Quartets

Emerson cellist David Finckel delves into the notes with Andrew Farach-Colton

avid Finckel sits in his office perch above the Lincoln Center, flipping absorbedly through the score of Mozart's Prussian Quartets on a sultry September morning. Hazy sunshine turns the pages a dusty yellow. 'It's fantastic,' muses Finckel. 'There's nothing like these quartets in the entire quartet literature; there's nothing on this high a level that uses the cello in this way.'

The Emerson Quartet recently recorded these last three of Mozart's quartets. Composed expressly to please the cello-playing King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia, they all make prominent use of the instrument. 'You'll often hear cellists play these pieces badly,' Finckel says, 'and I'm including myself here, by the way. Normally, in the context of a standard string quartet concert, you're a supporting player, and now suddenly you're a leading player. It's especially challenging because the range of the solos in these works usually lies in the most problematic area of the instrument, technically speaking, which is between third and sixth positions – a kind of no-man's land between the low and high positions. Now, the cello sounds fantastic in that register; you can cut through anything, and if you're going to play the solo repertoire, you absolutely need to feel comfortable there. But some days it does feel like you're facing the Berlin Wall to get successfully from one side to the other.' Finckel laughs, then

'The awkwardness in the writing presages Beethoven – it's a pianist saying, "I can play this no problem"

returns to the score. 'Here's an example of a passage in that range.' He stops and points to the exquisite, aria-like cello solo that opens the slow movement of K589. 'This is a real place of honour for us cellists - but talk about an obligation!' He inspects my Dover reprint edition more closely. 'I meant to bring the facsimile of the manuscript to show you. There's always something to be learned from studying them. I try to impress this in my teaching, too, along with the importance of using the best possible edition.' He pulls a copy of the cello part from his briefcase. 'This Bärenreiter edition is exactly what you see in Mozart's manuscript. You know, older editions did not go to the trouble of distinguishing between a "carrot" and a dot [staccato mark], though these two symbols indicate different types of articulation. According to Mozart's father, in his treatise on violin-playing, the "carrot" meant you were to lift the bow



from the string; dots mean that the note is shorter and not connected to the next.'

We compare the two editions. Lo and behold, in the third bar there's a dot in my Dover score and a 'carrot' in the Bärenreiter. He points to the latter. 'Look at that little note stuck in the middle of a legato melody. It gives a different feeling when you remove the bow from the string - like an intake of breath.' Finckel sings the phrase, varying the articulation to make his point. 'If you're using the older edition, you're not seeing what Mozart wanted - that drives me crazy.'

Flipping ahead, Finckel reaches the finale of K590, Mozart's last quartet. He grins. 'The development section of this movement is filled with seeming impossibilities. The awkwardness in the writing presages Beethoven. Take those rolling passages of descending sixteenth notes in sequence: it's a pianist saying "I can play this with my left hand, no problem." It doesn't matter what the key is. Well, on a violin, viola or cello, as soon as you start to move to a key with flats, you've lost the open strings along with the opportunity to change strings smoothly.

'I actually try to play some of these long sequences in a single bow stroke with the idea of following what the composer heard in his imagination. Although this is a challenge, at least you're visually showing the audience that this is meant to be delivered in one breath, just as a singer wouldn't breathe in the middle of a phrase.'

Is this one of the 'Everests' of the string quartet repertoire, then, as far as the cellist is concerned? 'It's a struggle, yeah,' Finckel concedes. 'But, somehow, Mozart had gone beyond that in this work; he didn't seem to care how difficult it was. In my mind, at least, this final movement is as virtuosic as quartet writing gets.' @

▶ To read Gramophone's review, turn to page 62



The historical view

Alfred Einstein Mozart: His Character, His Work (1945) The last work attains a complete equality of all the movements - it is like a Mozartean farewell to Havdn and.

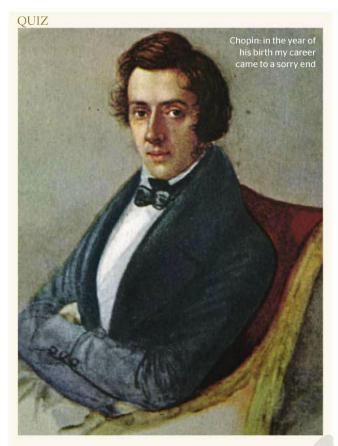
in the Andante, it seems to mingle the bliss and sorrow of a farewell to life. How beautiful life has been! How sad! How brief!

Hans Keller The Mozart Companion (1956)

'K589 in B flat (1790) is perhaps the intensest "shocker"...especially in the minuet and trio, both virtuosic in all directions. The middle section of the trio develops the minuet! We might almost be in the 20th century."

Paul Griffiths The String Quartet: A History (1982)

'Mozart's Prussian Quartets...have often been rated below his Haydn set, but although they are less spectacular in their range, beauty and daring, the F major in particular contains an emotional and musical complexity he never equalled in the medium, and rarely beyond it.'



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Pit your wits against Gramophone

was born in a year when Denmark welcomed a new king to the throne. Things in France were not so celebratory: a pack of man-eating wolves disturbed northwestern regions, killing 18 people.

My lasting pedagogical contribution is an extra-large collection of works that have become part of a student's essential routine. The first note is deceptively easy an oboist's daily chore.

The same year that Chopin declared his arrival into the

world, I broke my arm in a carriage accident. And that ended my career as a concert soloist.

I was unwilling to accept a dedication in sunny A major, terming it unintelligible. For the fictional son of a Russian nobleman, these same sounds were beyond unplayable: they represented betrayal and humiliation.

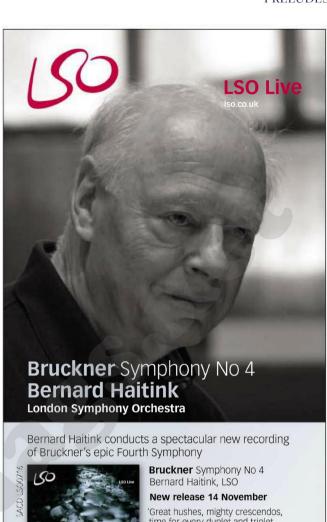
I am buried among the revered. The ghosts of Dorian Gray, Carmen and Turkish bathers roam the cemetery.

HOW TO ENTER

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SEPTEMBER ISSUE WINNER

The mystery film composer was Miklós Rósza. The first correct answer drawn was submitted by Ben Chodziesner, of Caulfield, Australia, who wins a selection of CDs.



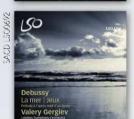


time for every duplet and triplet to be grounded yet to resonate with momentum. This was Bruckner's maximal minimalism at its most majestic' The Times (UK) concert review



Mahler Symphony No 9 Valery Gergiev, LSO **Outstanding Recording**

Nothing can detract from the excellence of this disc: it is quite outstanding in every respect International Record Review (UK)



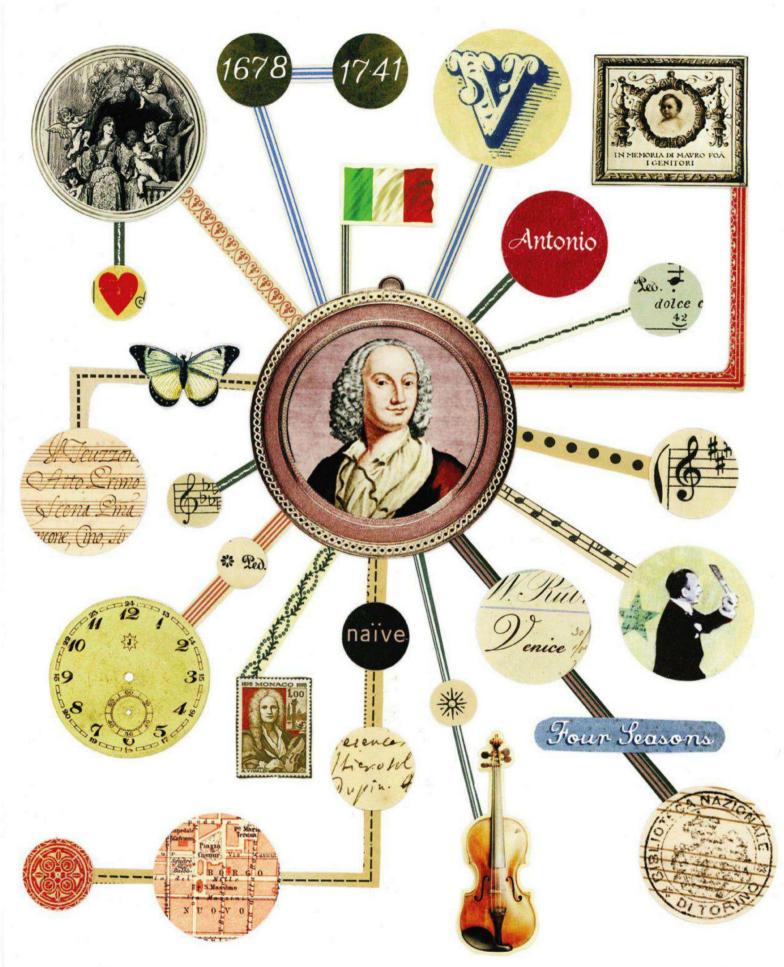
Debussy La mer, Jeux Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune Valery Gergiev, LSO

'this disc proves Gergiev to be a fine Debussy conductor ... there is a certitude as well as subtlety even in the subtle textures of the Prélude, while in *La Mer*, one can almost taste the salt spray' *Sunday Times* (UK)

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THE QUEST FOR THE THE QUEST FOR THE PRIEST

Vivaldi may have been dismissed as lightweight since his death but his true genius is finally emerging thanks to Naïve's epic Vivaldi Edition. A decade into the project, **Richard Wigmore** investigates the Turin archives to discover more

Illustration by Martin O'Neill

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be Four Seasons bids fair to being the most popular classical piece of all time. There have been at least 200 recordings, and counting, and it continues to be irresistible to TV advertisers and mobile phone companies. It is piped promiscuously as telephone-hold music and into shopping malls from Buenos Aires to Bombay, and it has even infiltrated the American pop charts. Yet such is the Seasons' picturesque charm and visceral energy that it has survived unscathed more than half a century of kitsch and commercialisation.

The Gloria, RV589, meanwhile, with its trumpeting opening and infectiously bouncy setting of 'Domine fili unigenite', is perennially popular with choral societies. Assorted concertos for flute, for one or more violins - the works that sealed Vivaldi's European fame - and an ear-tickling concerto for lute, crop up regularly in concert. Countertenors from James Bowman to Andreas Scholl have helped popularise the hauntingly melancholic F minor Stabat mater, RV621. And yet... Beyond a handful of favourites, Vivaldi has long remained more or less uncharted territory for the floating voter. Despite the impassioned advocacy of specialists, he has been too easily viewed as an engaging lightweight who inevitably pales before the twin Titans of the Baroque, Bach and Handel.

Enter record label Naïve, now halfway through a heroic 20-year project that, when completed, will dwarf the complete recorded editions of Haydn symphonies and Bach cantatas. Having to date released some 50 recordings – many of them awardwinners – the Vivaldi Edition is already changing perceptions of the Prete Rosso, or Red Priest, as Vivaldi was dubbed in his lifetime. The project's raison d'être is the vast collection of manuscripts –

over half Vivaldi's total output – that two centuries after the composer's death found its way into the Biblioteca Nazionale in Turin, a city that, actually, the much-travelled Venetian probably never visited. Masterminding the edition is an Italian-American, Susan Orlando, viola da gamba player, musicologist and one-woman Vivaldi industry of prodigious energy and enthusiasm. As she reveals when we meet in a café beneath one of the graceful arched porticos that line the city, the story of how the manuscripts arrived in Turin reads almost like a spy chase.

A TALE OF TWO BROTHERS

When Vivaldi died, in apparent poverty, in Vienna in 1741 (almost exactly 50 years before Mozart), his music was seeping out of fashion in Italy amid the craze for Neapolitan opera and the chic new style galant. But his concertos, The Four Seasons especially, were still in demand north of the Alps. For decades Vivaldi manuscripts were must-have souvenirs for travellers visiting Venice, as part of the Grand Tour - and savouring the musical delights of the Ospedale della Pietà, the charitable institution for foundling and illegitimate girls with which Vivaldi was associated for much of his life. The sharp-nosed composer even withheld many of his concertos and sonatas from publication because of the financial advantage attached to selling autograph manuscripts. One admirer of his music was a Genoese nobleman and collector, Count Giacomo Durazzo, administrator of the Vienna Court Opera who encouraged Gluck's operatic reforms in the 1760s.

Says Orlando: 'After Vivaldi's death his personal collection of hundreds of scores was sold, perhaps by the composer's brother Francesco, to a Venetian aristocrat, Jacopo Soranzo, who at some point in the second half of the 18th century sold them to Count Durazzo. Durazzo had no heirs and when he died he left his massive collection of music, which included much more than just Vivaldi, to his family in whose palace in Genoa these works remained for a century.'

In an era when Vivaldi was little more than a historical footnote, no one seemed to know or care how important the collection was. Then, in 1893, the 27 volumes were divided between two Durazzo brothers, Marcello and Flavio. 'When Marcello died in 1922 he left his manuscripts to a Salesian scholastic institution near Casale Monferrato,' says Orlando. 'When they were transported there they were unceremoniously dumped in a courtyard! In need of money for restoration, in 1926 the monastery's rector decided to sell the manuscripts, and contacted the Biblioteca Nazionale in Turin. Luigi Torri, director of the library, consulted Alberto Gentili, professor of music history at the University of Turin, who immediately realised the collection's worth. Gentili then approached a friend, the Jewish stockbroker Roberto Foà, who bought the volumes in 1927 and donated them to the library in memory of his son Mauro, who had died in childhood.'

In 1928 Gentili was able to reveal to the world a selection of the musical treasures from the Durazzo

The title page to 'Vivaldi's Turandot', *Teuzzone*



collection. But it was another two years before the Biblioteca Nazionale acquired the remaining Vivaldi manuscripts. 'It was only after long negotiations that the last of the family's heirs, Marquis Giuseppe Maria Durazzo, who lived in Genoa, agreed to sell the remaining manuscripts to the library,' says Orlando. 'The Durazzo family were apparently infuriated at the disrespect shown by the Salesians. The finance was provided by a wealthy industrialist, Filippo Giordano, who in a tragic coincidence had also lost a son, Renzo, in childhood.'

So, finally, in 1930, the two Durazzo collections were united in Turin, a total of some 450 unpublished works: nearly 300 concertos for various instruments (including 110 for violin and 39 for bassoon), sonatas, huge swathes of sacred music, 15 complete operas, plus fragments and numerous individual arias. 'It made headlines all over the world,' says Orlando. 'Then, for the next two decades, little happened.' There were occasional concerts of Vivaldi's music, like those mounted in Rapallo by the American poet Ezra Pound – a passionate Vivaldi fan – and his friend the violinist Olga Rudge. In 1939 *L'Olimpiade* was staged in Siena – the first Vivaldi opera to be performed since his lifetime. But it was only after the war that the Vivaldi renaissance got under way.

INITIAL STIRRINGS

By 1950 those talismanic Vivaldi works, The Four Seasons and the Gloria, RV589, had been recorded. Shortly afterwards the Milan publishing house of Ricordi, famed for its association with Verdi, began a project to publish performing editions of all the instrumental music by Vivaldi found in the Foà-Giordano collection. The project was spearheaded by the Vivaldi enthusiast Antonio Fanna, founder in 1947 of the Istituto Italiano Antonio Vivaldi, and the composer Gian Francesco Malipiero. Yet, as Susan Orlando is quick to stress, even then, Vivaldi's music, outside the obvious popular hits, didn't really catch on in the wider musical world. 'This may have been in part because it was difficult to find Ricordi's performing editions outside of Italy, and the format, which required musicians to purchase the full score in a small format and then to rent the parts for the orchestra, discouraged many.'

This was the era of the Venetian chamber orchestra I Musici, when the music was more likely to plod than to soar. Pianist-musicologist Charles Rosen once described Vivaldi's fast movements as inducing a sense of 'jogging on a treadmill'. Listening to I Musici, you can hear what he meant. During the 1970s and '80s, too, Philips recorded a pioneering series of Vivaldi sacred works, recently published by Ricordi, with conductor-musicologist Vittorio Negri: worthy, but now sounding hopelessly outdated. 'Negri was a progressive spirit in his day,' Orlando adds. 'But his performances, and others of their time, don't stand up now. Not only were the instruments he used modern, but far less was known then about bows and gut strings - in the 17th and 18th centuries they were made by craftsmen in unions, who wanted to guard their secrets. We've had to slowly figure

it out. Researching performing practice over the last three decades or so has made us realise so much about phrasing and articulation. All these things have lightened Vivaldi's music and freed it. At the time Negri was making recordings they didn't have this knowledge. They were coming from a Romantic tradition, which weighted Vivaldi's music down.

'I also think he was still suffering from the gibe, coined by the composer Luigi Dallapiccola, that he composed the same concerto so many times over. Stravinsky then seized on it, and with his cachet it did much damage. It's certainly held back a serious assessment of Vivaldi and his music.'

Liberation, if not universal popularity, came when the period-instrument movement really hit its stride. Since the 1990s there have been thrilling Vivaldi recordings by a clutch of period violinists, including Viktoria Mullova, Andrew Manze and Giuliano Carmignola, all eloquently rebutting Dallapiccola's sideswipe. Subtleties, delicate nuances and a dancing lightness of touch made the music seem so much more vital than in earlier generations. Hyperion's series with the King's Consort has revealed unsuspected riches in Vivaldi's little-known sacred music. But it is the ongoing Naïve Edition, conceived in the late 1990s by Turin musicologist Alberto Basso, that leads the crusade to bring the unknown Vivaldi to light.

'Alberto had thought long and hard as to how this music could be brought to the public. He then hit upon the idea of recording the entire Turin Vivaldi archive, comprising about 90 per cent of his autograph manuscripts, and 50 per cent of his total output – some 120 discs' worth of music! He approached Opus 111, which was then taken over by another French label, Naïve, whose owner Patrick Zelnik was enthusiastic about the project.

'Naïve has always been a creative company, with a trust in musicians and musicologists rather than a reliance on accountants,' continues Orlando, who in 2001 was co-opted by her friend Basso and Naïve to supervise the gargantuan project. The pair agreed to group the works systematically, by genre - a disc of violin concertos, a disc of oboe concertos, etc - rather than in a mix-and-match fashion. So discs have been appearing at the rate of four or five a year, including one opera. 'That Vivaldi was a prolific opera composer is probably his least-known aspect and one which this recording project has been crucial in changing.' The first release after the Naïve takeover was the opulently orchestrated 'sacred military oratorio' Juditha triumphans. From the outset Naïve was keen that the CD covers should themselves be artworks. The upshot is a coolly audacious series of (mainly) female portraits by French photographer Denis Rouvre that brilliantly mingle haute couture, whimsy and ironic, postmodernist camp.

DELVING INTO THE ARCHIVE

After our preliminary Vivaldi skirmish over coffee, we walk across the Piazza Carlo Alberto to the Biblioteca Nazionale. Its handsomely ornate façade, built in 1873 as the stables of the Prince •

VIVALDI: CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

'The peculiar characteristic of Vivaldi's music... is that it is wild and irregular'

John Hawkins, A General History of the Science and Practice of Music (1776)

Below: an excerpt of 'Et in terra' from the Gloria RV588; an example of Vivaldi's excessive corrections





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VIVALDI: CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

If acute and rapid tones are evil, then Vivaldi has much of the sin to answer for'

Charles Burney, A General History of Music (1776-89)

Below: Susan Orlando, mastermind of the Vivaldi Edition, with Richard Wigmore on the steps of the Biblioteca Nazionale in Turin. Bottom: donning white gloves to browse Vivaldi's manuscripts



• of Carignano, is deceptive: behind it, the archive is housed, in metal cabinets, in an ultra-utilitarian 1950s structure. Each of the 27 volumes is identically bound, in cardboard covered with parchment. Those donated by Foà bear the inscription 'In memoria di Mauro Foà' and those by Giordano 'In memoria di Renzo Giordano', each with a photo of the young child in question. Donning white gloves – acquired only recently by the cash-strapped library – we leaf through the autograph manuscript of *Orlando furioso*, something of a flagship among Vivaldi operas since Marilyn Horne starred in a production in San Francisco in 1977.

Famed for his fluency, Vivaldi reportedly boasted late in life that he could compose a concerto faster than his copyist could write it out. Certainly the Orlando furioso manuscript - evidently the composer's fair copy – gives an impression of controlled urgency. The handwriting combines elegant precision with a bold, confident sweep. Crossings out, as when Vivaldi alters harmonic progressions in a recitative, are neatly ruled. In several places he changes the original text of the vocal line. In places, though, there are signs of frantic haste as the handwriting slopes ever more impulsively forward. Appropriately, Orlando's mad scene - the opera's dramatic high point - provokes the most frenzied script of all, even in a fair copy. In an earlier opera based on Ariosto's epic, Orlando finto pazzo, we glimpse Vivaldi's wry sense of humour. After composing a replacement aria at the behest of one of the singers, he notes, 'Se questo non piace, non voglio più scrivere di musica' - 'If you don't like this one, I'm giving up composing!'

As Susan Orlando indicates (a glut of Orlandos here!), several of the arias are in another, more measured hand – possibly the work of one of Vivaldi's nephews. On the title page of another

opera, *Tito Manlio*, whipped up for a royal wedding in Mantua that was then cancelled, the composer wrote 'Musica fatto in 5 giorni' – 'Music written in five days'. Vivaldi was never one to fight shy of hyperbole. But the autograph score exudes a galeforce fury that leaves the *Orlando* mad scene gasping. The parts of the score copied by another hand look all the more sober by comparison.

Here and there are notes in Vivaldi's hand that give hints on performance practices of the time, such as the oft-repeated indication *senza clavicembali* in the plural, indicating that he often used two harpsichords in the continuo section. On another page we see *senza clavicembalo*, in the singular. As Susan Orlando observes, in 18th-century prints and paintings of orchestras there are often two harpsichords, contrary to the usual practice today.

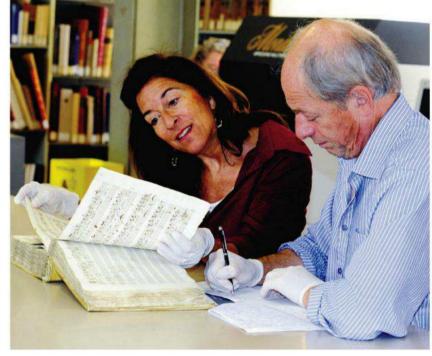
Other Vivaldi manuscripts – the famous *Gloria*, motets, his first opera *Ottone in villa*, bassoon concertos – confirm that his handwriting varied in clarity and neatness according to pressure of time and, perhaps, force of inspiration. Working, as opposed to fair, copies are peppered with intemperate crossings-out and bits glued on or over existing pages. In one instance part of a page has been sewn on.

One characteristic of the autograph manuscripts of many larger works is the heading LDBMDA on the title page. Usually this appears as a decorative monogram, with the letters intertwined. But in *Teuzzone*, the latest opera to be recorded by Naïve – and, incidentally, the first live recording of the opera – the initials are spelt out. Scholars have debated what they mean, though no one has improved on Reinhard Strohm's suggestion: 'Laus Deo Beataeque Mariae Deiparae Amen' – a reminder, too, that Vivaldi was a priest as well as a composer, teacher, opera impresario and a virtuoso violinist of whom an admiring contemporary wrote of him bringing his fingers up 'to only a straw's distance from the bridge' and playing 'with incredible rapidity'.

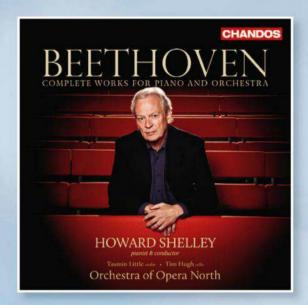
AN OPERA COMPOSER REBORN

Late in life Vivaldi famously asserted that he had composed 94 operas. This could well be one of his trademark exaggerations, though it just might be more or less accurate if we include *pasticcios* – a genre of opera summarised disparagingly by Joachim Quantz, composer and pet flautist to Frederick the Great, as 'patched together with arias of various masters, which is called "pastry" by the Italians'. Complete autograph scores of 15 survive in Turin; a couple of other operas are missing one act (as the doyen of British Vivaldi scholars, Michael Talbot, suggests, the composer probably sent these away for copying or rehearsal, and never recovered them), while one, *La verità in cimento*, lacks only its final aria, and has already been successfully recorded by Naïve.

Partly thanks to Naïve's proselytising zeal, Vivaldi's operas are now beginning to receive fully staged performances. Last winter a stylish, Baroquemeets-contemporary production of *Orlando furioso* conducted by Jean-Christophe Spinosi was sold out



PHOTOGRAPHY: ROBERTO MINARDA



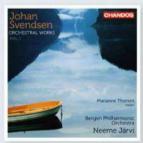
Disc of the Month Beethoven

Complete Works for Piano and Orchestra

Conducting from the keyboard, Howard Shelley performs Beethoven's complete works for piano and orchestra with the Orchestra of Opera North. Alongside the Piano Concertos Nos 1-5, the Triple Concerto featuring the violinist Tasmin Little and cellist Tim Hugh, and the Choral Fantasia, this unique 4-CD set includes the Violin Concerto as arranged for piano, the early E flat Concerto, WoO 4, and the Rondo, WoO 6, originally intended for the Second Piano Concerto.

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Rachmaninoff

The final disc in the Rachmaninoff series comprises The Bells, the cantata Spring, and the Three Russian Songs. It was recorded live at the Proms by the BBC Philharmonic, conducted by Gianandrea Noseda with the Chorus of the Mariinsky Theatre. 'The soloists soared, the choir boomed, and Noseda powered the orchestra through thrilling climaxes', wrote The Guardian.

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Mendelssohn

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après la nuit...

The trumpet is the undisputed star of this disc featuring Philippe Schartz. He is accompanied by the Solistes Européens, Luxembourg conducted by Christoph König, with the bassoonist Karen Geoghegan one of the guest soloists. The programme includes works by Hindemith, Jolivet, and Copland.

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- Ottone in villa session with (L-R)
 Roberta Invernizzi, Veronica
 Cangemi, Julia Lezhneva,
 Sonia Prina and Topi Lehtipuu
- 2 Mezzo Ann Hallenberg with Federico Maria Sardelli and his Modo Antiquo ensemble recording the second volume of 'New Discoveries' in Florence in October 2011
- **3** Jean-Christophe Spinosi and his Ensemble Matheus recording the opera Griselda
- 4 Rinaldo Alessandrini recording the Glorias in Crema, 2010
- **5** Sergio Azzolini and L'Aura Soave recording the bassoon concertos
- 6 Rinaldo Alessandrini recording the opera Armida

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▶ throughout its French tour and garnered enthusiastic reviews, though the consensus was that Vivaldi's inspiration rose sharply after a slightly limp first act in which not much happens. But when we talk in her apartment following our archive session, Susan Orlando stresses that the incipient Vivaldi opera revival could not have occurred without the Handel success story of the past two decades.

'The Handel opera craze, which you could never have predicted 30 years ago, has fuelled a wider interest in Baroque opera, and Vivaldi is now starting to benefit,' she says. 'Many opera buffs, sated with the familiar Mozart and Verdi, are curious to explore, though ironically it's Vivaldi's fellow countrymen who have been the slowest to cotton on!'

Although Handel and Vivaldi worked in the same form of opera seria, predicated on a succession of elaborate da capo arias, Orlando is reluctant to compare the two. 'They're like two completely different painters, each with their own strengths.' But after a pause she adds: 'It's a characteristic of 18th-century Venetian opera that the emotional content of each individual aria is more significant than the evolution of the drama. With Handel the drama is very important, whereas with Vivaldi it's just an excuse. Each aria in a Vivaldi opera is a cameo of an emotion; and while this is partly true of Handel's operas, he was much more concerned with building up his characters, aria by aria. This makes it easier to reconstruct missing acts or arias in Vivaldi's operas today by taking the music from an existing aria and placing it in an opera where we have the libretto but not the music. You can match the emotion – fury, fear, desperation and so on. He wrote many exciting arie di furore, for instance; but they can be transferred from one incensed character to another without anyone noticing the join. Vivaldi often did it himself!'

When I ask Orlando whether she discerns any patterns in Vivaldi's opera composition, she cites his taste for exotic locations, manifested in *Montezuma* – an opera of lavish spectacle set during the Spanish conquest of Mexico – and *Teuzzone*, new off the presses this month. '*Teuzzone* is almost certainly the first ever opera on a Chinese theme. Perhaps it was because Vivaldi was a Venetian that he chose such exotic subjects. Italy looks inwards, whereas Venice, as a leading trade centre, has always looked outwards – the Marco Polo tendency, if you like.'

If Vivaldi, with his more static approach to drama, is never likely to rival Handel in the opera house, the Naïve Edition has revealed the beauty and vitality of countless individual arias. *Tito Manlio*, the one he dashed off in five days, is among the most colourful operas – and true to form, conductor Ottavio Dantone stints neither on colour nor explosive energy. The story, centring on a repulsive Roman consul who condemns his son to death and threatens to have his defiant daughter, Vitellia, dragged naked through the streets of Rome, is hardly the jolliest of subjects for a wedding; and it's somehow apt that the bride cried off at the last moment. Although Vivaldi's invention can be too cheerful for the appalling situations – a feature of so much Baroque opera –

VIVALDI'S TEUZZONE

Fabrice Fitch explores the opera's Chinese setting, which also tempted Jordi Savall

Naïve is marking the 10th anniversary of its major Vivaldi Edition - the midway point of the project - with the opera Teuzzone, first performed in Mantua in 1718. The label has achieved something of a coup, tempting Jordi Savall (pictured right) away from his own label, Alia Vox, and into a collaboration with Naïve, with whom he has long been associated.

The plot is set in China, but

the political and psychological intriques feel contemporary. 'Given my interest in cultural exchanges between East and West,' says Savall, 'I've found the orientalising character of Teuzzone fascinating.' The plot centres on the heir to the Chinese throne whose father dies in battle. The father names the son Teuzzone as his successor in a will he entrusts to a minister, Cino. However, the dead emperor's fiancée. Zidania. colludes with Cino to falsify the will, marry Teuzzone herself, and



retain power. Many intrigues and double-crosses later there's the obligatory happy ending (Vivaldi wrote the opera for the wedding of a noble patron).

'There's an almost Freudian dimension to the libretto,' says Savall. 'The story of the will's falsification suggests that Vivaldi and his librettist had researched Chinese customs, rather than simply treat China as a far-away exotic place. I think also that Vivaldi may have heard some Chinese music, because in several of the arias the ensemble

accompanies the singer in unison, playing the same line, just like a Chinese orchestra.

This isn't Savall's first brush with Vivaldi operas - he directed Farnace some years ago. To begin with, I wasn't that interested in Vivaldi because he's so often performed, and because the violin predominates to such an extent - and I'm a viol player! But Farnace made me realise what a fine opera composer he is, and the arias in Teuzzone are very beautiful.'

For review, turn to page 97

FIVE UNMISSABLE RELEASES IN THE NAÏVE VIVALDI EDITION

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Vespers Soloists; Concerto Italiano / Rinaldo Alessandrini

Naïve (E) (2) OP30383 (12/03)

If you want to venture beyond the famous Gloria, try these exhilarating, impassioned performances of the hugely varied music Vivaldi composed to



Orlando furioso
Soloists; Ensemble Matheus /
Jean-Christophe Spinosi
Naïve (M) (3) OP30393 (4/05)

With a superb cast headed by the flame-toned Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Spinosi brings Vivaldi's 'magic' opera to thrilling theatrical life.



Griselda

Soloists; Ensemble Matheus / Jean-Christophe Spinosi Naïve (M) (3) OP30419 (10/06)

Another high-octane performance from Spinosi, with Lemieux, again, brilliant in the title-role, and soprano Veronica Cangemi deeply moving in Costanza's lament.

VIVALDI: CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

'That clergyman, an excellent violinist, and a middling composer'

Carlo Goldoni, Memoirs (1787)

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VIVALDI: CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

Limited by a physical ailment, he seems to burst with an inner urge for action, an urge that is surely at the root of his tendency to write large numbers of works very quickly'

Karl Heller, Antonio Vivaldi: The Red Priest of Venice (1991) the arias are vividly contrasted and often evocatively scored. Highlights include a 'hunting' aria with roistering horns, a sulphurous vengeance number for Vitellia, and an atmospheric sleep scene – something of a Vivaldi speciality – for the imprisoned Manlio.

Orlando furioso, to the same basic libretto as Handel's Orlando, has been another Vivaldi discovery in the high-voltage performance directed by Spinosi: it's an opera that, as those French critics suggested, gets better as it goes along. There are emotionally charged accompanied recitatives, rare in Vivaldi's operas, a mad scene that vies with Handel's as a graphic musical depiction of incoherence, and several ravishing slow arias, including one for Ruggiero with a floridly expressive flute part above muted strings and a bass-line fastidiously marked '1 Violio con Arco/Violette e Bassi/Pizzicatti/Senza Cembali' (those plural harpsichords again!).

Even more compelling, to my ears, is Griselda, an opera that seems especially suited to Spinosi's dancing-on-hot-coals approach. The Griselda legend, familiar from Chaucer and Boccaccio, is squirm-inducing: an improbably long-suffering wife who remains devoted in the face of repeated humiliations by her husband. Even in its more enlightened 18th-century incarnation, the story leaves a nasty taste. But it was a sure-fire hit with audiences in Vivaldi's day, when any Italian opera composer worth his salt turned out his own Griselda. Again, desperate situations do not always call forth desperate music. But most of the arias are strikingly inventive, full of dizzying coloratura and raw Vivaldian energy – above all in a ferocious outburst for Griselda in response to a suitor's attempted blackmail. There is a dramatic trio (ensembles are even rarer in Vivaldi than in Handel) and, best of all, a poignant slow aria for Costanza, the daughter Griselda believes dead.

THE VIVALDI STYLE

Vivaldi is rightly famed for the elemental excitement of his fast movements, kick-started by a laconic, sharply rhythmic opening gambit that electrified musical Europe in the first half of the 18th century. 'Those first three or four notes – they just get to you,' as Susan Orlando puts it. Like the man himself, his fast arias and concerto movements are often restless to the point of hyperactivity, a quality that didn't always find favour in conservative Georgian England, where the statelier idiom of Corelli held sway. A musician sympathetic to Vivaldi, the Oxford professor William Hayes, went so far as to justify the

volatility of his music by ascribing it to 'an excess of mercury in his constitution'.

After 50 recordings and 10 years running the project, Susan Orlando knows Vivaldi better than most. Even she, though, can be wrong-footed. 'Vivaldi codified the solo concerto style for a whole generation in Europe. But what never ceases to amaze me is the phenomenal imaginative range of his concertos, their endless fund of striking and original ideas. Last year I walked into a recording session in which they were rehearsing one of Vivaldi's violin concertos. The whole melodic and harmonic layout seemed so unfamiliar that I thought they must be practising a work by another composer. It took me several minutes to realise it was Vivaldi. It says something about his variety that he could pull the wool over *my* eyes!'

If Vivaldi's Allegros immediately hit you on the drum of the ear, many of his slow movements, in both vocal and instrumental works, mine a vein of melancholy, even tragedy, that may faze the unwary. Susan Orlando cites as one of her absolute Vivaldi favourites 'Gelida in ogni veno' from the opera Farnace, another gory tale of family feuding set in Roman times. 'Falling layers of dissonant, glacial strings portray Farnace's frozen horror that he is responsible for his son's imagined death. This aria is typical of Vivaldi, too, in its very slow rate of harmonic change, with lingering suspensions that intensify Farnace's agony.' In one of Vivaldi's most famous works, the Gloria, RV589, the 'Et in terra pax' exudes a mournfulness matched only by the corresponding movement of the 'other' Gloria, RV588: an astonishing setting of these comforting words where, as Susan Orlando puts it, 'the voices cascade sadly downwards, one after the other'.

At the risk of indulging in psycho-bio, it is tempting to suggest that the desolation distilled in these and other slow movements - say, in some of the cello concertos, memorably recorded in the Naïve Edition by Christophe Coin - reflects the composer's own feelings of isolation and frustration beneath his self-confident, even overbearing, exterior. From birth Vivaldi was sickly, suffering from what he called 'strettezza di petto', literally 'tightness of the chest' - most probably acute and chronic asthma. As Michael Talbot has suggested, the characteristic manic energy of Vivaldi's fast movements, and his habitual wanderlust - he travelled voraciously within Italy and abroad, usually to produce operas, from 1713 onwards were displacement activities, compensating for the limited mobility in his daily life.

VIVALDI EDITION TIMELINE A decade of highlights

2000

Naïve acquires record label Opus 111 and takes over the launch of the major undertaking that is the Vivaldi Edition recording project. Release of the first major vocal work in the Edition is the oratorio Juditha triumphans, with Magdalena Kožená in the title-role and the Academia Montis Regalis, directed by Alessandro de Marchi.

2003

Release of the Vespri per l'Assunzione di Maria Vergine directed by Rinaldo Alessandrini (right) - the best-selling CD in the Vivaldi Edition.



2004

Following the world-premiere recording of *La verità* in cimento (right), Jean-Christophe Spinosi records *Orlando furioso*.



A WHIFF OF SCANDAL

In later life Vivaldi famously courted gossip through his close association with two sisters: the contralto Anna Giraud (Italianised to Girò), an aspiring young singer whom he adopted as his protégée when she was still in her teens, and for whom he wrote, inter alia, the role of Griselda; and Paolina, who acted as his nurse and factotum. Two salacious new biopics are in the pipeline, one of them, starring Jessica Biel of *The Illusionist* and Ben Kingsley, promising to depict 'the musician-priest's inner battles to preserve his vows of celibacy in the face of love'. But for Susan Orlando, as for most Vivaldi scholars, the idea that Anna – perhaps Paolina, too – became the composer's mistress is preposterous.

'In fact, I often wonder whether he wasn't asexual. People wallow in Girò gossip, of course. But we don't know anything. Think about it: he's in chronic poor health and doesn't get around easily. Whenever he travelled he had to have several people with him, including his father, who died only four years before him. It defies belief that we wouldn't have known about it had this frail red-haired priest been regularly slipping off for a liaison with Anna. Venice is a very contained city, where anonymity isn't easy, especially for someone as famous and easily recognisable as Vivaldi.

'We know, of course, that the sisters travelled with the composer, along with his father and maybe others. The Vivaldis formed a sort of cottage industry, and I believe that Anna and her sister, who came from a separated family and lived on their own, were brought into the bosom of the family. If there had been any evidence of a liaison, Vivaldi would have risked excommunication. The playwright Carlo Goldoni, who collaborated with Vivaldi on Griselda, relates in a matter-of-fact way how, when the composer had finished an aria, he called to Anna in the next room: 'Come and see this, it's fantastic!' It was a master-pupil relationship, and I simply don't buy into the prurient speculation. Whatever sex drive Vivaldi had - and we mustn't forget he was a lifelong invalid - may well have been sublimated in the music.'

FORZA ITALIA

While north Europeans once led the field in period performance, a glance through the impressive list of names netted by the Naïve Edition might suggest that these days the frisson and drive of Vivaldi's music, sexually charged or otherwise, are best realised by Italians. 'It's innate with them,' says Orlando. 'In vocal music it's the language, of course – just hear



how the recitatives come alive when sung by Sara Mingardo or Sonia Prina. But in instrumental music the best Italian musicians instinctively grasp the spirit, above all the flamboyance. An American choral conductor friend who loves Vivaldi heard Rinaldo Alessandrini's recording of the two *Glorias* and was both thrilled and taken aback by the liberties he took with such things as rubato and dynamics. As he said, "In the US we don't dare do that". Italians do dare, because they understand that the music is coming from a world where everything is exaggerated.'

One of the epiphanies in the Naïve Edition and there is plenty of competition – has been Alessandrini's three-disc set of Vespers music Vivaldi composed for the Pietà and assorted Venetian churches. (Incidentally, documentary evidence exists that the tenor and bass parts were sung at pitch by girls in the Pietà with freakishly low voices, rather than being transposed up an octave.) In an interview he gave when the recording was released, Alessandrini stressed that these Vespers were spectacular events in 18th-century Venice, 'like a special football match today. It was also part of everyday life where people didn't have to make a strong spiritual adjustment. I don't believe in this divide between a mystical and profane experience for Italians.' >

VIVALDI: CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

'Several of Vivaldi's traits are apparent in his music: a feeling for the theatrical as well as a profound understanding of the tragedy of passing time; religious fervour and sensuality; the inventiveness of a visionary imagination and an appreciation of man's inner self'

Cesare Fertonani, The Vivaldi Edition (antonio-vivaldi.eu) (2010)

2005 UK release of Orlando furioso, conducted by Spinosi (right), which becomes the best-selling opera in the Vivaldi Edition



2010 Fully staged version of *Orlando furioso* starring Marie-Nicole Lemieux (right) is performed at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées.



Jordi Savall and Le Concert des Nations record *Teuzzone* (right) at the Royal Opera of Versailles, as part of a month-long Vivaldi celebration



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▶ You can hear what he means in his exuberantly theatrical performance of one of the set's highlights: a sumptuous setting of *Dixit Dominus*, RV594, for five soloists, two choirs and two orchestras. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the G minor *Nisi Dominus* for contralto and strings, RV608, juxtaposes brilliant, concerto-like writing (including a rare solo for viola d'amore in the 'Gloria Patri') with some of Vivaldi's most profound and inwardlooking music. Susan Orlando describes the ravishing nocturnal aria, 'Cum dederit delectis suis somnum', as akin to 'a spiritual experience, with the singer sustaining a long note for many measures before the orchestra re-enters'.

As a native of Corsica, another star of the Naïve Edition, Jean-Christophe Spinosi, is almost an honorary Italian. He has probably done more than any other conductor to bring Vivaldi's operas alive, his passionate belief in the Venetian's genius audible in every bar. 'Vivaldi's music appears to be simple but its impact is quite profound,' he says. 'Where this comes from is hard to explain, it's a mystery, but there is something deeply poetic on a human level in his music and it is magical at the same time. This is particular only to Vivaldi and it is what makes people keep going back to his music.'

THE FUTURE

After a low-profile start – as Susan Orlando recalls, 'It was several years before the public and critics cottoned on to the project' – the Vivaldi Edition, in 2011, is going from strength to strength. 'Bringing so much attention to Vivaldi encourages more musicians to perform his music and musicologists to search for hidden Vivaldi pieces lingering in archives. In fact, recently, several compositions by Vivaldi have come to light every year. Recording this music also sets standards that are then improved on in an endless upward spiral. It was much like this when all of Bach's music began to be recorded and reach a wide public. And over the next eight years or so we expect the Edition to convert ever more music lovers to the Venetian's cause.'

If the hitherto unknown operas - 10 down, five to go - have inevitably been the most publicised discoveries, the range and depth of Vivaldi's sacred music has hardly been less revelatory, especially given the coruscating advocacy of Rinaldo Alessandrini and Alessandro de Marchi. Ensemble Zefiro directed by oboist Alfredo Bernardini has made a joyous disc of the rarely aired multiple concertos, with their fascinating kaleidoscope of contrasting colours several of them written for the lavish Dresden orchestra. Many more of these beguiling works are still to appear. And if you thought one disc, let alone half a dozen, of Vivaldi bassoon concertos might be a Baroque burble-fest too far, try Sergio Azzolini. Says Susan Orlando: 'Azzolini wanted to be a painter when he was young, and he has a visual image in his mind of this music. He makes these concertos come alive in a way no one else ever has. This in turn gets other musicians striving to animate the music in the same way.'

So what chance, I ask Orlando, of a complete Vivaldi Edition for the 21st century?

'Once we have finished this vast project to record the fabulous music in manuscript in the Turin library, it would only be natural to go on to record the other 40 per cent of Vivaldi's known output,' she says. 'Having the complete works of a composer as prodigious as Vivaldi in one recorded edition, with the music clearly divided into categories, is the best way to make it accessible to scholars and the general public alike: a great part of our musical heritage restored, and a missing link in the history of Western music.'

Even his most fervent admirers concede that the Venetian Prete Rosso will never quite measure up to the intricacy and introspective depth of Bach, or the monumental grandeur and lyrical allure of Handel. But after living intensively with Vivaldi for a decade, Susan Orlando is optimistic that he will one day rank alongside them on the strength of his own distinctive qualities. 'More than almost any other composer, he makes you glad to be alive, even in those melancholic slow movements. And people react so spontaneously to his music. A few years ago we received a letter from a newly converted fan: "Naïve deserves a Nobel Prize for Health. Vivaldi is better than Prozac."

FIVE VIVALDI OFFERINGS FROM OTHER LABELS

The Vivaldi revival is spreading far and wide



Concertos for Two Violins Giuliano Carmignola, Viktoria Mullova vns Venice Baroque Orchestra / Andrea Marcon

Archiv © 477 7466AH (11/08) Six rare double concertos in inventive and poetic performances from two superbly matched violinists.



Six Cello Sonatas Pieter Wispelwey VC Florilegium

Channel Classics © CCS6294 (11/94)

Some of Vivaldi's most tender and introspective writing, realised with taste and sensitivity by Wispelwey and a varied continuo group.



'The Vivaldi Album' Cecilia Bartoli mez

Il Giardino Armonico /Giovanni Antonini Decca (Ē) 466 569-2DH (12/99)

Not for the faint-hearted, perhaps. But Bartoli brings to all the music here a passionate conviction and an astonishing palette of colours.



Stabat mater Andreas Scholl counterten Ensemble 415 / Chiara Banchini Harmonia Mundi (E) HMC90 1571 (4/96)

Scholl at his most ethereal in a mixed programme that includes Vivaldi's elegiac *Stabat mater* and a touching pastoral cantata.



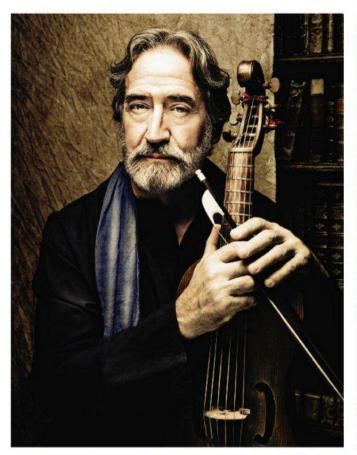
'Amor Sacro' Simone Kermes sop Venice Baroque Orchestra / Andrea Marcon

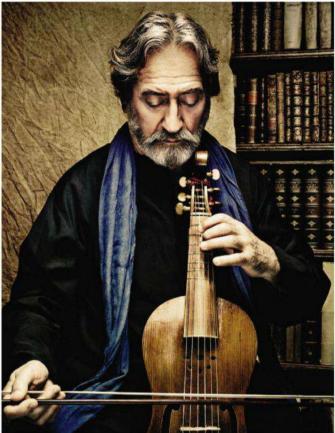
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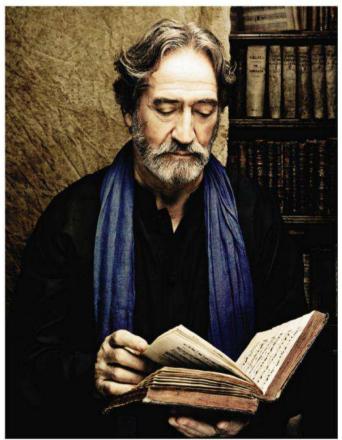
VIVALDI: CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

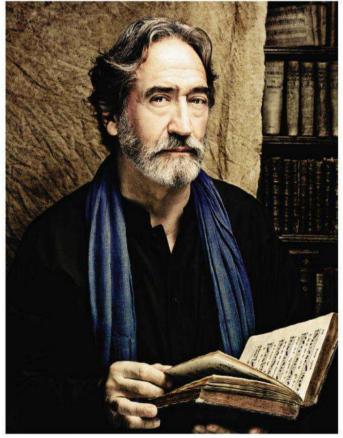
Vivaldi's music is written so naturally that it always brings to my mind the image of water, the coming and going of waves — apt for a Venetian! Slow movements evoke images of the calm lagoon, while his virtuosic pieces call to my mind a stormy sea"

Sara Mingardo, contralto (2011)









'What we do acts powerfully on people's lives. It can heal them'

34 GRAMOPHONE NOVEMBER 2011 gramophone.co.uk

SOME MUSICIANS SPEND TWO YEARS
DREAMING UP A CONCEPT ALBUM.
FOR JORDI SAVALL, IT'S TWO DECADES.
FEW ARTISTS TODAY ARE AS COMMITTED
TO EXPLORING THE FUSION OF MUSICAL
CULTURES THROUGH HISTORY AND
THE LESSONS THAT HAS FOR OUR OWN
FRACTURED AGE

Words by Fabrice Fitch Portraits by Josep Molina

ordi Savall's study at his home in Barcelona is more like a scholar's than a busy musician's: first editions of 17th-century treatises line the walls, and tables are piled high with books on a plethora of subjects – the trial of Joan of Arc, the slave trade, Erasmus, *War and Peace...* and, of course, scores of scores.

The Spanish early music specialist, simply but stylishly dressed and looking a good decade younger than his 70 years, readily admits to spending a great deal of time documenting in libraries, and it's clear that he relishes the activity for its own sake. But, as with any practising musician – Savall is renowned both as a violist and musical director – this taste for bookish knowledge has a particular slant.

'People are surprised sometimes that we regularly put out three discs a year,' he tells me in his softly spoken, bass tones, 'but I've been reading and researching ideas for projects since 1965, when we started out, and that was 11 years before our first recording. Some of these projects I carry around with me for 20 years before they come to fruition, and some will have involved hundreds of hours of reading books and choosing pieces. But all that time explains why we're so productive now.'

Time, indeed, is a recurring theme in Savall's conversation: the time it takes to record, to really get to know the style of a particular repertoire, and to mull over ideas and give them substance. Here is a musician whose lifetime quest for musical

perfection and whose painstaking patience mean that no project is ever rushed. His measured manner is surely a reflection of this professional outlook, and must have served him well over his long and distinguished career.

In recent years, Savall and his wife - his muse and collaborator, the soprano Montserrat Figueras – have issued more and more ambitious projects with their ensemble, Hesperion XXI, on their (literally) in-house label, Alia Vox. Some of them, such as the forthcoming Mare nostrum, to be released in early December, run to two or three CDs, and are lavishly illustrated in coffee-table-book format and scrupulously documented. The formula, something of a novelty in itself, is designed to show how music participates in a wider cultural and social life. As Gramophone readers will know, these projects have increasingly taken the form of collaborations with musicians from cultures beyond Western Europe. Another project now nearing completion is The Sublime Porte, the second of two discs centred on Istanbul and its earlier incarnation, Constantinople, and due for release in November. So, not unfittingly over a cup of green tea, I first ask Savall how this interest in non-Western music came about.

'When Montserrat and I worked on our first project together in the 1970s, we were conscious that Spain's medieval heritage resulted from the co-existence of three distinct cultures – Christianity, Judaism and Islam – which you can still see today

SAVALL ON DISC



'Secular music from Christian and Jewish Spain: 1450-1550' Figueras sop

Hesperion XX / Savall Virgin Classics © 2 561591-2

Savall's first venture with his ensemble, Hesperion XX, this landmark recording is still one of his calling cards.



Monteverdi: Vespro della Beata Vergine Soloists;

Coro del Centro Musica Antica de Padova; La Capilla Reial / Savall







JORDI SAVALL'S DIVERSE MUSICAL WORLDS

Jordi Savall's lavishly illustrated recording sets contain evocative paintings and writings that illuminate his exploration of disparate times, different worlds, the way music connects cultures. Handsomely reproduced visual materials include the three above: Savall's 'Invocation à la nuit' is crowned by Rousseau's *La gitane endormie*, top left; below it, the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice.

painted by Gabriele Bella, illustrates one of Savall's Vivaldian excursions; and, above, the ecstasy of 16th-century Spanish music is epitomised by El Greco's *La Anunciación*.

with musicians who've collaborated with us for many years, from all round the Mediterranean basin. With this latest book-CD we're reflecting on the idea of the Mediterranean itself.'

Given Savall's preoccupation with the many cultures of Spanish lands, this broader theme has an obvious relevance. 'There's a historical narrative underpinning the programme, and a musical one as well. Each piece illustrates or stands for a significant event or moment in the history of the region.' For Savall, much of that history is the interaction between its cultures, sometimes amicable, sometimes antagonistic. 'We're currently working with two possible presentations: thematic, which is more like a concert programme; and historical, organised in chronological order. In the latter, the programme begins with three expository tracks introducing the Christian, Jewish and Islamic cultures, inviting the listener to perceive the differences as well as the similarities. Then the history of the region unfolds in a series of chapters.'

But what of the musical narrative? 'Well, there are two CDs' worth of new recordings and about

WE SPARKED A POLEMIC BETWEEN TRADITIONALISTS AND THOSE INTERESTED IN REVIVING ANCIENT MUSIC

SAVALL ON DISC



'Tous les matins du monde' Soloists incl Biondi vn; Le Concert des Nations / Savall

Alia Vox 🕒 🎂 AVSA9821

A chart-topper, and not just on the classical lists: the soundtrack to this award-winning film showcases not only Savall but the superlative musicians he attracts.



'Les voix humaines' Jordi Savall vada Alia Vox (© AV9803 One man and his viol(s): Savall can

hold his own as a soloist, and there are some real gems on this recital, ranging from the great and good to the obscure and exceptional.



'Jérusalem' Soloists; Hesperion XXI; La Capilla Reial / Savall Alia Vox (F) _______AVSA9863

Another award-winner: the humanitarian impulse informing this project captures the imagination, as does the sumptuous presentation.

in the language, the architecture, and Spanish and Catalan culture generally,' he says. 'But we were also deeply shocked at Spain's role in suppressing those cultures, by expelling the Jews in 1492, and the Muslims - even converted ones - in 1609. We felt it our duty to make a space for these cultures alongside more familiar repertoire. So our very first project for EMI Reflexe (1976) was a double album of medieval secular Spanish and Jewish music. We also realised that in this repertoire the modern distinction between high and low culture can be very misleading. The reason some of these powerful popular melodies survived or migrated from one culture to another was that they fulfilled an expressive need. They are simply beautiful, and deserve to be heard.'

Within the burgeoning early music community, this attitude met with a certain resistance but, undeterred, Savall, Figueras and their ensemble (they added the last numeral of 'XXI' at the turn of the century) have continued to explore Europe's cultural roots alongside their recordings of more 'mainstream' early repertoire. Occasionally their tours have resulted in musical travels even further afield, prompted by meetings with musicians in the Near-East, South America and Japan.

Seemingly closer to home, the *Mare nostrum* project takes its title from the Romans' name for the Mediterranean, 'our sea'. But, as Savall explains, that sea is shared by several cultures. 'We've experimented in recent years with programmes combining Spanish, Moroccan, Sephardic, Italian and Provencal music, working

one of music recorded previously,' he says. 'We make up different orders and playlists in iTunes and listen to them in different environments (even in the car), and on different types of equipment, to get a real sense of the sound and musical trajectory. That way we can judge what works and in what best order.' Savall shows me a printout of Mare nostrum's current state, which looks very like a storyboard. I notice that some of the main events have no music associated with them, either because Savall hasn't decided which piece to use, or because there's no music corresponding to the event. Might that reflect the reality of research, and of our knowledge of early music, which includes many gaps and lost works? Savall agrees. 'That's one reason why I always list my sources, so that others - musicians and others - can follow up on what we've done and continue exploring for themselves.' The dynamic between personal reflection, documentation and musical practice is crucial to his creative approach.

An idea similar to *Mare nostrum* underlies *The Sublime Porte*, which was the point of contact in Constantinople between the ruling Ottoman Court and a great variety of foreign cultures and their music: Greek, Armenian, Sephardic Jewish, some of which has been transmitted in writing, and some orally. But compare Hesperion XXI's performances of Turkish music with traditional performances of the same repertoire, and you hear real differences.

Here again, Savall's knowledge of early sources led to a surprising approach: 'We were working on Ottoman courtly 17th- and 18th-century pieces, which are usually performed very slowly

nowadays. During the preparation and rehearsals I found the slow tempos problematic, and was reminded of many examples in early music of very fast dance tempos, for example in 16th-century Folias, Chaconnes, Menuets etc, which became much slower over the next 200 years. Then I remembered a passage from Rousseau's Dictionnaire, in which he discusses how to dance the minuet.' At this point, Savall gets the original edition of Sébastien de Brossard's Dictionnaire off the shelf, and compares it with Rousseau's of nearly a century later. He reads me the passages in question, in which Rousseau quotes Brossard but contradicts him, saying that the Minuet isn't a fast dance at all, as Brossard claimed, but actually the slowest of all the dances used at court. 'So I imagined a similar evolution in the Ottoman Court, convinced that the tempo around 1700 was faster than in the 19th or the 21st centuries, and I asked the Turkish musicians we were working with whether we could try playing faster. At first they were hesitant because they'd always performed those pieces at a certain speed, but after working on them for some time, they really enjoyed playing them at a faster and lighter tempo. When we performed our concerts in Istanbul, it sparked a real polemic between the traditionalists and musicians interested in the revival of the ancient Ottoman music.'

These collaborations led Savall to reconsider basic aspects of his music-making in a manner of which his younger self would surely have approved. When preparing for the Istanbul projects, this included learning to use different tuning systems which are very precisely notated - for example, in the work of the 18th-century musician Dimitrie Cantemir whose treatise inspired the first of Savall's Istanbul projects. And this has, in turn, caused him to think anew about tuning when returning to Western repertories. I suggest to Savall that his attitude is very different from so-called 'crossover'. For him, it's a question of ethics. 'It's a matter of dialogue, of respect for the other. With crossover, there's an imbalance between the two components, as when a classical artist decides to play Indian music, say, or to play Bach on a non-Western instrument. Crossover is the opposite of an intercultural dialogue, which must be based on a mutual respect for the differences between cultures of the West and the Near-East; we're convinced that it's very important to promote a real intercultural dialogue within a social and cultural context. In our projects - like another recent success, Jérusalem - Muslim, Jewish and Christian musicians all play their own music, and we play together in our troubadours, Cantigas or Trecento repertoire, because the musical languages of the West and Near-East were very similar in the Middle Ages. If we introduce an ud [an Islamic plucked string instrument, from which the lute was derived] into a crusading song, it's because these instruments were around at the time. The combination of styles and sounds respects the musical context.

Besides, these exchanges were far more fluid than they are now.'

As another example of his belief in culture as an agent of social change,
Savall cites Daniel Barenboim's work with the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. 'The project is in itself extraordinary, but difficult to realise in true harmony because of the dramatic political and human context, and also because of the very different musical traditions and styles between Palestinians and Israelis. But for all these reasons, it's all the more necessary to make a success of it.'

In recognition of his efforts in that direction, Savall was made an EU Cultural Ambassador for Inter-Cultural Dialogue in 2008, and, jointly with Monserrat Figueras, 'Artists for Peace' as part of UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassadors programme.

Looking beyond *Mare nostrum*, peace is both the subject and the title of their next project. '*Da pacem*,' he says, 'will be a proper book, so to speak, containing texts on peace by a number of distinguished writers, and reproductions of paintings by the contemporary Catalan artist Antoni Tàpies, some of which have never before been published. Musically, it will be just as wide-ranging, from the plainsong 'Da pacem' to Arvo Pärt, and all sorts in between, including Dufay, Josquin, Lassus and the instrumental music of Christopher Tye, Alfonso Ferrabosco and others.'

Clearly, Savall enjoys a degree of artistic freedom that is rare among classical performers of any stripe, let alone those specialising in early music. I imagine it's due in part to the phenomenal success of the soundtrack he recorded for the award-winning film Tous les matins du monde (1991) starring Gérard Depardieu. As Savall recalls, his grateful bemusement still evident, it stayed at No 3 in the French charts for months while Michael Jackson and Queen vied for the top spot. But the creation of Alia Vox has allowed him not only to work just on projects dear to him, but to do so with kindred spirits, and at the pace he wants. 'When I recorded with other labels, the worst thing you'd hear at the end of a long session was the words, "Sorry, the technician's already left." It could take you hours to hit your stride, to get to a point where you felt truly free. Now we're able to do exactly what we want.'

On the subject of recording, Savall has one more dig at received wisdom. It begins with a restatement of his artistic credo, not from a social perspective this time but from that of the individual: 'We musicians sometimes forget how powerfully what we do can act on people's lives, how it can heal them. That's why recording is so important, because it allows us to capture the most intense moments, and the most perfect sound. And in a concert, you're usually less likely to achieve that. It's like a trapeze artist who, if performing in front of a crowd without a safety net, won't take risks. But if he's got a safety net, he's truly able to let go, and then he may do something extraordinary, unique, transcendental.'

► To read Gramophone's review of Jordi Savall's 'Hispania & Japan: Dialogues', turn to page 67







Memorable partnerships: With Ton Koopman in France, 1976 (top); with actor Gérard Depardieu and Savall's wife Montserrat Figueras during the filming of Tous les matins du monde, 1990 (centre); performing with Figueras in Basel, 1976 (above)

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vperion new releases

EDVARD GRIEG & FRANZ LISZT Piano Concertos

A concerto album from Stephen Hough is always a significant event and for this new recording Stephen travelled to Norway to join forces with Andrew Litton and the Bergen Philharmonic. Performances are exciting and magisterial, Stephen's breathtaking virtuosity being harnessed to poetic refinement and finesse—hallmarks that have already helped his concerto recordings to win two Gramophone 'Record of the Year' awards

STEPHEN HOUGH piano BERGEN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA **ANDREW LITTON conductor**



CDA67817

CDA67903

THE ROMANTIC PIANO CONCERTO - 55 Charles-Marie Widor

Everyone knows at least some of Widor's compositions for organ, but it is often forgotten that he wrote many other significant works, notably the two fantastic piano concertos which here receive their first recordings. Markus Becker

the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Thierry Fischer more than do justice to Widor's imaginative **MARKUS BECKER piano**

BBC NATIONAL ORCHESTRA OF WALES

Homage to Paderewski

THIERRY FISCHER conductor

Of the twenty-two works on this recording, from composers including Bartók, Martinů and Milhaud, seventeen were intended for the memorial album 'Homage to Paderewski' published by Boosey & Hawkes in 1942. A further six pieces written for the pianist also feature, including a Mazurka for two pianos by Britten. Jonathan Plowright performs this follow-up to his wonderful 'Hommage à Chopin' with flair and dedication

JONATHAN PLOWRIGHT piano with AARON SHORR piano



HENRY PURCELL Odes

Two glorious Purcell Odes enjoy performances of perfection from The King's Consort, the Choir of New College Oxford, and a distinguished line-up of soloists.

'Hail! bright Cecilia' is the last, and greatest, of Purcell's four Odes to St Cecilia, and 'Who can from joy refrain?' was composed in celebration of the Duke of Gloucester's sixth

'Highly desirable additions to any Purcell collection' (The Times)

THE KING'S CONSORT / ROBERT KING





CDH55454

PERCY GRAINGER

Rambles & Reflections

As the fiftieth anniversary year of Grainger's death draws to a close, here is another chance to sample the composer's

miraculous piano transcriptions in dazzling performances by compatriot Piers Lane. Everything from Stanford's folksy 'Irish Dances' to the hyper-romantic lushness of the Strauss-inspired 'Ramble on Love' is met with deep pianistic sophistication from both arranger and performer.

'A charming recital, beautifully played and recorded' (Classic FM Magazine)

PIERS LANE piano

JOSEPH HAYDN

String Quartets Opp 71 & 74

These quartets date from 1793 and were written when Haydn returned home to Vienna after a visit to London which had cemented his international fame as a composer and public figure. They possess an orchestral sonority—frequent modulations, dynamic variations and increasingly virtuosic writing—and demonstrate the composer's astonishing elegance, lyricism and his immense skill in fusing the profound with the light-hearted. In these compelling interpretations the Takács Quartet displays an absolute unanimity of tone and style and cements its reputation as one of today's greatest string quartets.

TAKÁCS QUARTET

TOMÁS LUIS DE VICTORIA

De Beata Maria Virgine & Surge propera

Westminster Cathedral Choir continues its survey of the Masses of Tomás Luis de Victoria with sumptuous new recordings of the 'Missa De Beata Maria Virgine' and the 'Missa Surge propera'. Both Masses are for five voices, the first being based on the plainsong Mass IX and the second on Palestrina's eponymous four-voice motet which is also included here. Recorded in the rich acoustic of Westminster Cathedral, this is a real treat.

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL CHOIR **MARTIN BAKER conductor**

JOHANNES BRAHMS

The Complete Songs – 3

For this third volume in Hyperion's Brahms Songs cycle, Graham Johnson is joined by the young German tenor Simon Bode in his debut recording for the label. Equally at home in the opera house and the recital hall, Bode's is a voice fusing control and deep beauty, and proves perfect for these twenty-six songs ranging from Brahms' beloved folksong to immaculate settings of Goethe, Mörike and Hölty as well as a host of more obscure poets.

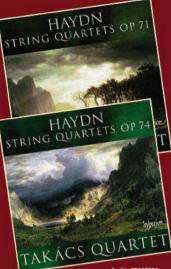
SIMON BODE tenor **GRAHAM JOHNSON piano**

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS & SIR JOHN BLACKWOOD McEWEN

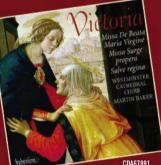
Flos Cambi & Viola Concerto

Lawrence Power has established himself as the most sought-after violist of his generation and his sumptuous tone and persuasive interpretations have lead to many comparisons with the pioneering British violist Lionel Tertis, for whom the three works on this disc were written. The Vaughan Williams works display an unabashed romanticism and pastoral elegance, while the lush orchestration and memorable themes in McEwen's 1901 concerto reveal this large-scale work as a neglected gem of the viola repertoire.

LAWRENCE POWER viola **BBC NATIONAL ORCHESTRA OF WALES** MARTYN BRABBINS conductor



On 71 - CDA67793 Op 74: CDA67781



CDA67891





MP3 and lossless downloads of all our recordings are available from www.hyperion-records.co.uk

GRAMOPHONE Reviews

November 2011































































GRAMOPHONE Reviewers



Andrew Mellor Reviews Editor

In tweaking the reviews pages for this revamped issue of Gramophone, we sought the advice of an old hand: our founder, Sir Compton Mackenzie. He impressed on his initial staff the importance of expert, guiding opinion that would help readers to buy records they were likely to enjoy. That service remains at the heart of what we do. It always will.

One thing Mackenzie and his early staff soon discovered was that time itself is a rather fine critic. In the moment, definitive verdicts can't always be delivered. But comparisons can be drawn and contexts set; with such rapid advances in technology and an increasingly voluminous procession of recordings arriving each month, context is now more vital than ever.

So what have we done? In a sense, not all that much - allowed our writing to breathe, avoided cramping it with gimmicks, cherished photography that speaks of performance. We'll run the odd archive review and continue to list comparative versions – offering that context wherever we can. DVDs haven't disappeared; you'll find them within the most appropriate genre section. Our reviewers remain diverse. knowledgeable and brilliant. But we have allowed them one indulgence: the right to award their own Critic's Choice to a product that has impressed them almost beyond measure.

Andrew Achenbach Nalen Anthoni Mike Ashman Philip Clark Rob Cowan* Justin Davidson Jeremy Dibble Peter Dickinson Jed Distler **Duncan Druce** Adrian Edwards Richard Fairman David Fallows David Fanning lain Fenion Fabrice Fitch Jonathan

Freeman-Attwood **Edward Greenfield David Gutman** Lindsay Kemp Philip Kennicott Tess Knighton Andrew Lamb Richard Lawrence

Ivan March Ivan Moody Bryce Morrison Jeremy Nicholas Christopher Nickol Geoffrey Norris Richard Osborne Stephen Plaistow Peter Quantrill Guy Rickards Malcolm Riley Marc Rochester Julie Anne Sadie Edward Seckerson Pwyll ap Siôn Harriet Smith Ken Smith David Patrick Stearns David Threasher David Vickers John Warrack Richard Whitehouse Arnold Whittall Richard Wigmore William Yeoman

* Contributing editor

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Our pick of the best 12 recordings reviewed in each issue. Every month the discs earning the most alowina endorsements from Gramophone's reviewers are put forward, the editorial team selecting the top dozen must-hear products, which include reissue and DVD choices.



Critic's Choice

An independent accolade from a particular reviewer who believes a recording they have listened to is exceptional enough to be singled out for especially high praise.

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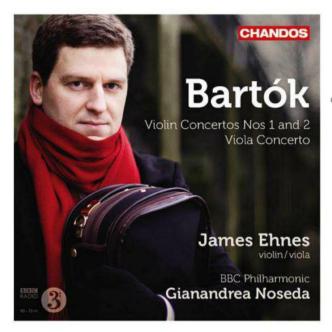
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G Recording of the Month

'The kernel of the unfinished Viola Concerto is its slow movement and I challenge any reader to name a version that is either more moving or more beautifully played'

Hungarian Rhapsodies

Rob Cowan welcomes a new recording of Bartók's concertos for violin and viola

Bartók

Violin Concertos - No 1, Sz36; No 2, Sz112. Viola Concerto, Sz120

James Fhnes vn/va

BBC Philharmonic Orchestra / Gianandrea Noseda

Chandos (F) CHAN10690 (78' • DDD)

Among the many 'if only...' fantasies that marry a particular work to a particular artist is Jascha Heifetz performing Bartók's First Violin Concerto. OK, granted the work only came to light when its prompting inspiration Stefi Gever died, but still, 1958 (the year of the eventual premiere) witnessed the height of Heifetz's prime and if he had had a mind to play it, he easily could have done. I write all of this because, with the possible exception of Isaac Stern (Ormandy and the Philadelphia on Sony - nla), James Ehnes offers us the most 'Heifetzian' recording yet, a vibrant, tender-hearted, boisterously youthful account, bittersweet where needs be and eagerly supported by the BBC Philharmonic under Gianandrea Noseda, who are consistently on the ball. The alternation of serenity (first movement, later the First Portrait) and dizzying, up-tempo moodswings (second movement) has rarely been more securely focused. I can't think of a finer CD version of the First Concerto

than this, though Thomas Zehetmair and Arabella Steinbacher run Ehnes pretty close.

Bartók never thought well enough of his First Concerto to acknowledge his 1938 Violin Concerto as his 'Second' and, yes, there's little doubt as to which work is the true masterpiece. Again, Ehnes and Noseda deliver a spontaneous, keen-edged reading, agile and light on its feet but facing some stiff CD competition. The most recent contender, by Barnabás Kelemen and the Hungarian National Philharmonic under Zoltán Kocsis, was recorded just a few months before the recording under review but sounds as if it hails from a different era, especially in terms of its close-set, 'in-your-face' engineering (very 'Mercury Living Stereo'). Kelemen and Kocsis make a formidable partnership and, to be truthful, their thrilling performance would be difficult to beat. Other viable digital contenders include a coltish Zehetmair in Budapest with Iván Fischer, and Steinbacher, whose persuasive, more relaxed account with the Suisse Romande Orchestra under Marek Janowski benefits from orchestral support that is truly three-dimensional, even if you're not listening via a super-audio facility. Both versions are coupled with the First Concerto, referred to above.

A good place to draw comparisons is the tranquil episode at 2'45" into the first movement of the Second Concerto (marked calmo) where the soloist sings quietly above a shimmering accompaniment of violas, cellos and basses, answered by ethereal upper strings, then woodwinds and horns, before the argument suddenly slams top-gear to forte and is abruptly off for the chase. Ehnes and Noseda judge this passage extremely well, the soloist sweet-toned but keeping just enough emotion in reserve. On Fischer's disc (2'42"), although the Budapesters sound admirably mysterious in the quieter music, Zehetmair is more matter-of-fact and the forte onslaught is less shocking. Steinbacher (2'45") sounds the most affectionate of the four, Janowski usefully stressing the accompaniment's rhythmic aspect, while Kelemen (2'43") plays with admirable purity of tone and Kocsis and his orchestra offer a rude awakening with the most violent forte of all! The one tiny point about the Chandos production that bothered me was the vaguely focused string passage that underpins the soloist's agitated sul ponticello at around 6'54" into the first movement. Beam up Steinbacher and Janowski in the same spot (7'30") and you'll soon hear what I mean. It's a very minor

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glitch but if you know the score well it'll momentarily pull you up. In general, though, Chandos offers a beautifully balanced sound picture, especially effective in the delicate traceries of the Andante tranquillo second movement, which alternates serenity and playfulness as only Bartók could. As to the finale, never before had I been so vividly reminded of an orchestral masterpiece from a few years earlier, Ravel's La valse (1920). Bartók's reworkings of key ideas from his own first movement are, after all, often cast in 3/4 time, and the combination of gaiety and impending catastrophe (which was prophetic in itself, given that this was the late 1930s) does indeed recall the accumulating tensions of Ravel's masterpiece, although Bartók contrives a rather happier ending.

In the unfinished Viola Concerto, which is in effect the work of a sick man bravely straining to employ a handful of dying creative embers, Ehnes fully matches the excellent Lawrence Power. Indeed, his rich, yielding tone makes an even stronger impression, reminiscent of William Primrose in his prime – which, paradoxically, would have been before Primrose commissioned the work. The kernel of the piece is its slow movement and I challenge any reader to name a version that

is either more moving or more beautifully played. I should also mention that Noseda and his players do a superb job with Tibor Serly's sparse but mesmerising completion of the orchestral score which, in its occasionally alarming textural juxtapositions, reminded me, from time to time, of two other striking 'late' works, both of them masterpieces: Mahler's Tenth and Shostakovich's Fifteenth. Though not exactly a comfortable listen, Bartók's Viola Concerto haunts the memory and because of its pared-to-the-bone textures means that Ehnes's soul-warming contribution comes across as especially powerful. So, an unqualified rave for the First Violin and Viola Concertos, and an enthusiastic endorsement for Ehnes's version of the 1938 Concerto, even bearing in mind that the listed options offer such exceptional competition. Paul Griffiths provides readable and authoritative booklet-notes. 6

Vn Concs Nos 1 & 2 – selected comparisons: Steinbacher, SRO, Janowski (11/10) (PENT) PTC5186 350 Zehetmair, Budapest Fest Orch, I Fischer (BERL) 0115292BC Vn Conc No 2 – selected comparison: Kelemen, Hungarian Nat PO, Kocsis

(10/11) (HUNG) HSACD32509 Va Conc – selected comparison: Power (12/10) (HYPE) CDA67687

Listening points

Your guide to the disc's memorable moments

Track 2, 6'56"

The First Concerto's second movement: the ebullience of the big central *tutti*, played with real swagger by the BBC PO (terrific brass), and Ehnes's gentle, tender-hearted response

Track 3, start

The Second Concerto's opening – confident announcement from Ehnes, clarity of the bassoon counterpoint, then, at 134", a notably warm tonal blend for the first statement from the full orchestra.

Track 3, 6'26"

Ehnes flies off vivace, unaccompanied, with winds, brass and side drum responding - terrific energy and really tight ensemble, though listen out for that slightly iffy moment at 6'54".

Track 4, 5'54"

The second movement, a bittersweet episode, Ehnes sounding sad, wistful and other-worldly, with winds taking turns to trill their comforting responses.

Track 5, 3'24"

The finale – a fierce, percussive battle between soloist and orchestra, though at 413° Ehrnes and his woodwind collaborators break off for some tender dialogue.

Track 6, 11'10"

An unsettling alarm towards the end of the first movement of the Viola Concerto, a good sampling of the starkness of the writing, with fabulous playing from Ehnes.



Orchestral



Geoffrey Norris reviews the Seoul Philharmonic's Debussy

'The dream-world is evoked in playing of magical softness and captivating charm'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 44



David Gutman reviews Tennstedt's Mahler on DVD

"...brass deliberately cussed, almost sour, woodwinds blended without creaminess, strings digging in deep" ► REVIEW ON PAGE 49

M Arnold

Cello Concerto, Op 136^a. Concertino for Flute and Strings, Op 19a^b. Fantasy for Recorder and String Quartet, Op 140^c. Saxophone Concerto^d. Symphony for Strings, Op 13^e

- ^aRaphael Wallfish VC ^bEsther Ingham fl
- ^cJohn Turner rec ^dCarl Raven asax
- ^{ae}Northern Chamber Orchestra / Nicholas Ward;
- bcdManchester Sinfonia / Richard Howarth Naxos § 8 572640 (73' • DDD)



Manchester gets to grips with concertante Arnold

Two meaty offerings from opposite ends of Sir Malcom Arnold's career top and tail this stimulating Naxos anthology. Composer and producer David Ellis put together the present performing edition of the Cello Concerto that Arnold penned for Julian Lloyd Webber in 1988; furthermore, Raphael Wallfisch has subtly tweaked the cello part. Following the concerto's RFH premiere, rumours abounded that the manuscript was incomplete, so disconcertingly bare was the orchestration and strangely subdued the solo writing. Now it emerges as an attractively clean-cut, formidably concentrated offering: the rhythmically pert outer movements are by no means lacking in lyrical impulse and act as an effective foil to the unnervingly bleak central Lento (whose growling double basses at the outset put me in mind of the opening of Sibelius's Fourth Symphony). Completed in 1946, the Symphony for Strings comprises another tautly argued, three-movement creation, its irrepressible drive and razor-sharp resourcefulness anticipating the first of Arnold's nine numbered symphonies from 1949.

Ellis also plays a key role in all three remaining items. The Concertino for flute and strings is a highly effective reworking of the endearing Op 19 Sonatina for flute and piano (composed for Richard Adeney in 1948), while the Saxophone Concerto cleverly overhauls a sparky Piano Sonata from 1942 (the next year brought the delectable *Three Shanties* for wind quintet, one of Arnold's first hits). Ellis devised, too, the new edition of the 1990 Fantasy for recorder and string quartet

(conceived for the brilliant Dutch virtuoso Michala Petri).

The performances span a period of some five years (and emanate from no fewer than four different venues) but are never less than expert and thoroughly dedicated. No true Arnold enthusiast will want to miss this valuable release. Andrew Achenbach

JS Bach

Keyboard Concertos, BWV1052-56

Ramin Bahrami pf

Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra / Riccardo Chailly

Decca © 478 2956DH (75' • DDD)

Recorded live, May 2009



Iranian Bahrami follows his solo Bach with concertos

The inter-reliance of keyboard and orchestra creating something 'positively embedded' (beyond mere dialogue) represents both the practical and ideological substance of these riveting performances. Riccardo Chailly's Bach from the Gewandhaus has often referenced a catalogue of styles which don't always stack up – the 'Third Way', as he calls it, where Romantic and historically informed approaches are effectively fused.

An unselfconscious frisson of symphonic timbre and period clarity really does kick these concertos off into some highly distinctive regions. Following the order of five new 'arrangements' Bach made for private and public performance (from earlier concertos for violin or oboe, or sinfonias from the cantatas), Chailly's unlikely role in this self-contained chamber repertoire is one less of conventional direction than shaping the evolving personality of each concerto as it moves from the fantasy of the broad D minor landscape to the expressive distillation par excellence of the F minor vignette.

But it's the direct and ringing pianism of Ramin Bahrami that defines this unusual collaboration. The figurative and textural traits of the D minor and major concertos find a compelling viscerality, without ever seeming aggressive; the E major is both skipping, serene and, in the last movement, gloriously quixotic. The slow movements are

all beautifully moulded, focused and still. Only the outer movements of a restless and over-accentuated A major let the side down. This is where Heinz Holliger's recent poetic reading on the oboe d'amore (ECM, A/11) truly lifts the heart.

There is something tantalising about the luminous Gewandhaus strings; few modern orchestras can play with such lightness and shape in this music. If restraint is not always a virtue, it is in the matter of long notes where some wise soul has suggested that a gradation of colour through vibrato is a mortal sin. Similarly, a judicious use of the pedal would bring more 'half-lights' into Bahrami's emotional canvas.

Surely there is a 'Fourth Way' where these hard-wired deconstructionist tendencies are challenged? However, this is still a remarkably interesting and vitally conceived disc to which I shall return eagerly and admiringly.

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

JS Bach · Schnittke

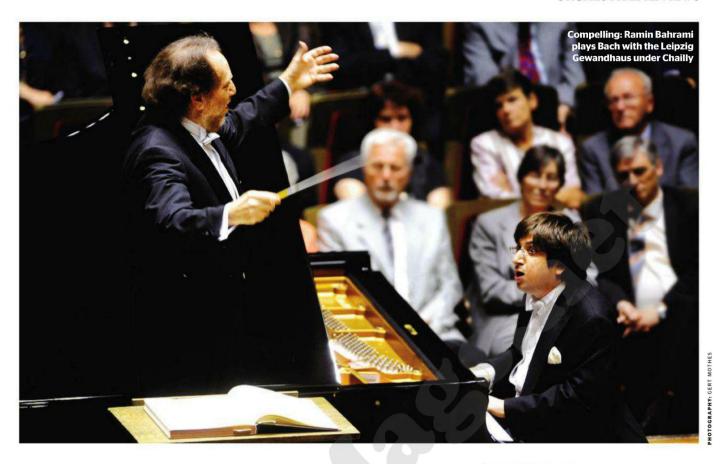
JS Bach Double Concerto, BWV1043
Schnittke Moz-Art à la Haydn. Concerto grosso No 1
Maria Alikhanova // Dmitri Bulgakov ob
Chamber Orchestra Kremlin / Misha Rachlevsky
Quartz (Ē) QTZ2083 (52' • DDD)



Schnittke refracting Mozart and placed next to Bach

Transcription, in various guises, is central to the works on this disc - flute and oboe being substituted for two violins in each case. That of the Bach Double Concerto is a straightforward arrangement by these soloists, at its most idiomatic in the ruminative dialogue of the Largo but with no lack of incisiveness in the movements on either side (even if the opening Vivace feels a little short-winded when devoid of any repeats). Of the two pieces by Alfred Schnittke, Moz-Art à la Haydn (1977) is heard in an arrangement by Anton Safronov which stresses its theatricality and constant mutation between the Classical masters, yet what was bitingly sardonic in the original feels a little blunted as the music uncertainly subsides before evanescing in a weary 'farewell'. The

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same might have been expected with Schnittke's own arrangement of his First Concerto grosso (1977), but here the composer has ensured a fresh slant on his most familiar work such that it loses only a little of its provocative force. It helps that Maria Alikhanova and Dmitri Bulgakov are so evidently attuned to this music - alternately soulful and scabrous in the initial three movements, before a pungent Cadenza and uproarious Rondo lead to the hazy recollections of the Postludio. The BIS account is readily eclipsed, not least when Misha Rachlevsky draws incisive playing from his Kremlin forces. Richard Whitehouse Conc grosso No 1 - selected comparison:

Bezaly, Cowie, Cape PO, Hughes (11/09) (BIS) BIS-CD1727

Beethoven

'In the Breath of Time' Symphonies - No 6, 'Pastoral'; No 8. Grosse Fuge, Op 93

Montreal Symphony Orchestra / Kent Nagano
Sony Classical (F) ② 88697 92360-2 (90' • DDD)
Includes 'Declaration of Interdependence', narrated
by David Suzuki in English and French



Two Beethoven symphonies followed by an enviro-lecture

Nagano and his Montreal players give an agreeable, somewhat Bruno Walter-ish account of Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony.

Somnolence occasionally threatens in the 'Scene by the Brook', abetted by the spacious and mellow Montreal acoustic, but the performance retains a shape and vitality through to a generously phrased account of the concluding 'Song of Thanksgiving'. The Eighth Symphony emerges boisterous, amusing and warm-hearted, much as it used to do in an earlier age, before the metronome merchants moved in with their shoot-to-kill policy over this epic jest. Sony's 90-minute two-CD set adds the Grosse Fuge and a fourminute lecture on the environment, first in English and then in French, from the geneticist and environmental campaigner Professor David Suzuki. Dare one suggest that a single-CD coupling of the two symphonies would have made a rather more agreeable - not to say environmentally friendly - release? Richard Osborne

Bruckner

Symphonies - No 4, 'Romantic' (1878/80, ed Nowak); No 7 (1885, ed Nowak)

Basle Symphony Orchestra / Mario Venzago

CPO

©

CPO77 615-2 (126' • DDD)

Bruckner

Symphonies - No 4, 'Romantic' (1878/80, ed Nowak); No 7 (1885, ed Nowak); No 9 (finale compl Carragan)

Philharmonie Festiva / Gerd Schaller

Profil © ④ PH11028 (3h 33' • DDD)





Three Bruckner symphonies in five individual performances

Mario Venzago is a Hans Swarowsky pupil who is best known in the UK as principal conductor of the Northern Sinfonia. This instalment of a projected complete Bruckner cycle for CPO is interesting in that it displays a markedly individual approach to the music, one where luminous textures and extreme tempo fluctuations are conspicuous by their frequency. In the Fourth Symphony, the sudden surge forwards at 10'47" into the second movement (after the sombre brass chords) lends the passage a sense of added urgency and the tapering off of phrases as the 'hunting' Scherzo peaks is another novel attribute. The finale starts very quickly, almost impatiently, but once the swirling drama has died down the chaste playing of the second set (from the strings) marks an effective contrast.

For the Seventh Venzago pushes his method a step or two further, even from the first note, which is elongated and distractingly detached from its immediate neighbour. The *Adagio* is at times extremely free: others may vary the pulse virtually as much (Furtwängler and Jochum, for example), but with Venzago the impression,



especially near the start of the movement, is more one of interpretative equivocation. Deryck Cooke used to accuse Jochum of favouring a 'stop-go' approach to Bruckner; heaven knows what he would have thought of this! As with the Fourth, the finale's second set, taken swiftly, has an appealing lightness and purity about it. What I do like about Venzago's Bruckner is its implied acknowledgement of nature, an almost Dvořákian sense of the outdoors. It's definitely worth trying and the recorded sound has considerable presence. The editions used by the way are, according to John F Berky's extraordinarily detailed Bruckner discography, 1886 (aka 1878/80) ed Leopold Nowak [1953] for the Fourth (CPO claim 'last version of 1879/80') and 1885 version, ed Leopold Nowak [1954] for the Seventh (1881-83 according to CPO).

Gerd Schaller is a fairly experienced theatre conductor whose way with Bruckner is dramatic, interpretatively direct, sensibly paced and in general unfussy. The Fourth enjoys a compellingly played finale (notably broader than Venzago's, especially at the start), the Seventh fine brass and woodwinds in the *Scherzo*'s Trio, although I have to say that Philharmonie Festiva, a gathering of musicians from various Munich orchestras, isn't quite of the front rank. String tone tends

towards thinness of texture and the overall blend lacks homogeneity; but the spirit is there and the musical message more than adequately conveyed. I suppose if I were to level one criticism at the performances it would be a relative lack of subtlety. For example, having done such a beautiful job tapering off the nobly arched coda of the Seventh's first movement, the closing *crescendo* could have entered just a tad more smoothly. A tiny point, but a marginally softer transition would have made all the difference. Then again, a sense of rawness benefits the angrier climaxes of the Ninth, the last one especially.

And there's the completed fourth movement, basically the latest (2010) revision of the same 1981-83 William Carragan completion that Yoav Talmi recorded with the Oslo Philharmonic (Chandos, 3/87^R - two previous revisions have also been recorded, though neither is available in the UK). Here I turned for comparison to a 2005 revised edition of the 'performance version' by Samale-Phillips-Cohrs-Mazzuca as featured as part of Marcus Bosch's more refined (and more resonantly recorded) Bruckner cycle with the Aachen Symphony Orchestra (Coviello Classics). The comparisons are revealing, especially the speculative closing pages where Samale et al revisit the crashing discord that crowns the Adagio (not unlike the finale of Mahler's Symphony No 10) then go on to end the work rather in the manner of the Seventh Symphony. Carragan's option is more gnarled and craggy but both are well worth hearing (as is Philips's version of the fragments as presented by Harnoncourt – Sony, 11/03). Incidentally, both Schaller and Venzago use the same editions of the Fourth and the Seventh Symphonies.

Summing up, I'd say that while none of the prime recommendations for the three works under discussion is seriously challenged (and there are very many to choose from), these particular performances exhibit a thorough understanding of Bruckner and would certainly spur you on to further listening were you to encounter them before any others. Of the two conductors, Schaller offers the more 'regular' interpretative options. **Rob Cowan**

Debussy · Ravel

Debussy La mer Ravel Ma Mère l'Oye^a. La valse^a Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra / Myung-Whun Chung DG ® 477 4498GH (54' • DDD) Recorded ^alive, May 2010



DG's new orchestral signing in staples from French masters

The aqueous glints and flecks of colour in Debussy's *La mer* are attractively caught in

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this performance by the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, of which Myung-Whun Chung has been music director and chief conductor since 2006. More than that, though, the playing conveys the surging atmosphere, the fluid movement and the awe-inspiring grandeur of 'De l'aube à midi sur la mer', the delicate playfulness of 'Jeux de vagues' and the sense of foreboding at the start of 'Dialogue du vent et de la mer' before the gusts and the waves launch into their dramatic discourse. The Seoul orchestra's sonority is both ripe and alert to detail, Chung's direction judging the pace and the range of dynamics in the music with a sure sense of its ebb and flow.

On different territory, the classical limpidity of Ravel's Ma Mère l'Oye is voiced clearly, sensitively and with apt restraint in 'Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant'. The exotic timbres of 'Laideronnette, impératrice des pagodes' are nicely pointed up, the dream-world of 'Le jardin féerique' evoked in playing of magical softness and captivating charm, and with glowing radiance at the end. Chung also has the measure of La valse. Starting tentatively, with the germinal motifs suggested in a whisper, the performance traces the dancers' sedate, graceful response to the seductive waltz metre with admirable decorum, before the music's potential for abandon begins to suggest itself in the giveand-take of rhythm and then in the gathering, sensual excitement of the closing bars.

Geoffrey Norris

Dvořák

Symphonies - No 7^a; No 8^b
SWR Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgart /
Sir Roger Norrington
Hänssler Classic (© CD93 277 (75' • DDD)

Recorded live, ^aApril, ^bSeptember 2010



The Norrington project turns to late symphonies by Dvořák

Some expected Norrington attributes (uncluttered textures, minimal vibrato, etc) help focus the bare essentials of both masterpieces, the Seventh emerging as mellow but austere, the Eighth as a breezy 'dance symphony' in all but name. The Seventh's potentially windblown outer movements ebb and flow much as they should, with heightened dynamics serving this or that aspect of the argument (ie, at the animated passage from 6'21" into the first movement). The first movement's development is securely projected, even though as given the overall climate is relatively temperate, and the Poco adagio second movement is lyrically moulded. Prominent middle and lower voices helpfully underpin the violin melody at the start of the

Scherzo and the finale's second set wears an amiable demeanour, as does most of the Eighth Symphony, the opening chorale played by lower woodwinds, horns, trombones and lower strings and here sounding both sombre and reassuring.

I sometimes wondered whether the Stuttgart violins were stinting a little on fortissimo 'attack' (Fischer's lusty Budapesters go more willingly for the jugular) but the third movement is sheer perfection, always warm and luminous, especially the bass-line at the start of both the outer section and the Trio, and the chattering coda. Also, the finale's achingly nostalgic last pages (an ingenious sequence of short episodes repeated exactly bar for bar) has Norrington cue Dvořák to bid us the gentlest of farewells, and the effect is entrancing. Comparisons abound, with Iván Fischer sweetening the line with copious portamentos and Nikolaus Harnoncourt offering a refresher course in how to listen beneath the top line. But Norrington definitely stacks up, and if you accept the principles that underline his approach, I wouldn't hesitate, especially as the sound quality is extremely good.

Rob Cowan

Selected comparisons:

Harnoncourt (12/98^R; 12/99^R) (WARN) 2564 68858-8 Fischer (9/10) (CHNN) CCSSA30010; CCSSA90110

R Edwards - Sibelius

R Edwards Violin Concerto, 'Maninyas' Sibelius Violin Concerto

Adele Anthony vri

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra / Arvo Volmer Canary Classics © CC09 (57' • DDD)



Violin concertos from up above and down under

Maninya is a word made up by Ross Edwards to describe a highly rhythmic style, inspired, he says, by the sounds of the Australian bush. To the uninitiated listener the Concerto comes across as a bright, cheerful piece in D major, its outer movements dominated by lively, irregular Stravinskian rhythms, but ultimately quite static in effect. I found it only mildly engaging, except at the end of the first movement, where the bright colours vanish, like dusk falling, and a sombre, mysterious mood briefly takes over. The second movement is in the form of a solo cadenza, leading to a slow, soft chorale, overlaid with improvisatory violin meditations. Throughout, Adele Anthony plays beautifully, with warm, luminous tone, and she's well supported by the Adelaide orchestra.

Anthony has the measure of the Sibelius, too, playing with complete assurance, and her mellow tone is heard to splendid effect in the lyrical passages, above all in the *Adagio*, whose

long melody is projected with an impressive sense of line. Yet it could be argued that the interpretation is too suave; the first movement's coda and much of the finale don't seem quite fiery or abandoned enough and there are places where the emotional colour is rather too comfortable. The low-lying orchestral passages, too, tend to miss the necessary dark, menacing quality. By contrast, Vilde Frang's recent recording goes through the full emotional gamut, with playing that is exceptionally compelling, by virtue of its spontaneity and wide expressive range.

Duncan Druce

Sibelius – selected comparison: Frang, WDR SO, Søndergård (4/10) (EMI) 684413-2

Franck

Le chasseur maudit. Les Djinns^a. Les Eolides. Symphonic Variations^a
^aCédric Tiberghien pf Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
of Liège / François-Xavier Roth
Cypres (F) CYP7612 (53' • DDD)



Liège's orchestra plays music by the city's famous son

François-Xavier Roth, not this time with his 'period' ensemble Les Siècles but with the Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, conducts a performance of César Franck's *Le chasseur maudit* that has dramatic thrust, demonic intensity and clearly defined textural detail as well. There is a very real sense, in listening to this performance, that Roth and his orchestra have the dark narrative in their very blood, so that its frenzy, its tensions and the cursed hunter's wild chase towards death come vividly before the mind's eye.

Liège prides itself on being Franck's birthplace and, although he defected to Paris and there gathered round him his famous 'bande' of creative acolytes, the Liège orchestra might well feel that it has a special duty to pull out all the stops in playing the city's illustrious son's music. It certainly sounds as though the musicians, under Roth's direction, have a firm grasp of the idiom here, not merely in Le chasseur maudit but also in Les Djinns, to which Cédric Tiberghien brings an added degree of dynamism as the piano soloist. The airier, more lyrical qualities of Les Eolides are observed with equal perception, the chattery woodwind figures that pre-echo the Saint-Saëns of the Organ Symphony done with a piquant delicacy that provides a contrast to the urgency and ecstasy elsewhere. Tiberghien is also soloist in the Variations symphoniques, a performance that highlights the discretion, the strength and the subtleties of expression that distinguish his pianism and find sympathetic counterparts in the orchestral playing.

Geoffrey Norris

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Gál · Schubert

Gál Symphony No 2, Op 53
Schubert Symphony No 9, 'Great', D944
Northern Sinfonia / Thomas Zehetmair
Avie (P. (2) AV2225 (99) • DDD)

Gál

Violin Concerto, Op 39^a. Violin Sonatas^b - Op 17; in D Thomas Albertus Irnberger vn bevgueni Sinaiski pf alsrael Chamber Orchestra / Robert Paternostro Gramola (F) 98921 (76' • DDD/DSD)





Gál's Second Symphony and a second Violin Concerto taping

As Gál is the main focus, let me deal with the 'Great C major' first. Once again, Zehetmair shows himself a natural Schubert interpreter, his association with the Northern Sinfonia paying handsome dividends in this lithe and fluent account of what Gál termed a 'universe of sound such as never appeared before or since'. Standard repertoire like this provides the true gauge of the conductor-orchestra dynamic, allowing no place to hide, where less familiar music can mask lack of rapport. Here, all sound in perfect harmony and if this new version does not replace classic accounts by the likes of Böhm, Boult, Harnoncourt or Rattle, it is none the less a fine modern interpretation caught in splendid sound.

Zehetmair's Gál Second Symphony (1942-43) is equally sensitive and unfussy, in a work whose emotive complex could easily be misinterpreted. Composed in Edinburgh at a tragic conjunction in the refugee composer's life, with the deaths in quick succession of his mother and (by suicide) sister, aunt and younger son, the elegiac *Adagio* – placed third after two shorter movements – is the work's core, sublimating the emotional turmoil he must have endured in music of sublime yet understated eloquence. In true Classical spirit, the large finale is outward-looking and positive in mood until the slow drawing-down of blinds in the resigned coda.

Gál's Violin Concerto (1931-32) is less troubled and better known, through Annette-Barbara Vogel's wonderful recording (with the Northern Sinfonia). Thomas Albertus Irnberger, who has an impressive array of recordings to his name, is another persuasive advocate for this lyrical, light-filled work. In pace very close to Vogel, both interpretations follow similar lines, the main difference being the sound: Gramola's is rather recessed. Irnberger's tone not so sweet. Were Vogel's disc unavailable I would have no hesitation in commending this newcomer but Avie's remains first choice with a fine programme (Violin Concertino and Triptych). Gramola's eminently sensible coupling is the two sonatas with piano accompaniment. Here, again, Avie's sound has more immediacy; in the B flat Op 17 Vogel gets to the heart of this turbulent score more convincingly (in both versions). Irnberger's is still a fine account and in the D major he has a winning way with this fine music; I prefer him to Frühwirth, though the latter's programme is superb. Both issues are recommended.

Guy Rickards

Vn Conc – comparative version:

Vogel, Nortbern Sinf, Woods (9/10) (AVIE) AV2146

Vn Sons – comparative version:

Vogel, Lagerspetz (8/10) (AVIE) AV2182

Vn Son, Op 17 – comparative versions:

Pacht, Lifschitz (1/05) (NIMB) NIS730/31

Vogel, Lecuona (CYBE) CYB360 901

Vn Son in D – comparative version:

Frübwirth, Sigfridsson (2/03) (AVIE) AV0009

Godard

Piano Concerto No 1, Op 31 $^{\rm a}$. Introduction and Allegro, Op 49 $^{\rm a}$. Symphonie orientale, Op 84 $^{\rm a}$ Victor Sangiorgio pf

Royal Scottish National Orchestra / Martin Yates
Dutton Epoch (M) CDLX7274 (70' • DDD)



More Godard dusted down, now his Piano Concerto

The French composer Benjamin Godard (1849-95) is remembered today for the Berceuse from his opera *Jocelyn* (Bing Crosby made a memorable recording of it with a violin obbligato played by Jascha Heifetz). It is clear from this, his works for violin and orchestra (Chloë Hanslip on Naxos, 4/08), his piano trios (Trio Parnassus on MDG), other recent recordings and the present disc that here was a composer of Mendelssohnian facility, lyricism and charm.

The four-movement Piano Concerto No 1 (1875) is a case in point, with an agreeably virtuoso solo part, strong themes and some beefy orchestral writing (the RSNO's fruity brass and enthusiastic percussion departments have plenty to do). The same is true of the Introduction and Allegro (1880) with its amusingly camp finale. Lovers of Saint-Saëns, Litolff and their ilk need not hesitate. Victor Sangiorgio, you feel, has had these works in his fingers for some time, while the equally infectious vitality that Martin Yates brings to proceedings adds to the impression of everyone having a thoroughly enjoyable time. Dutton's sound (Michael Ponder and Dexter Newman in Glasgow's Henry Wood Hall) is more spacious and resonant than the drier, cooler sound picture preferred by Hyperion for its Romantic Piano Concerto series.

Had they thought of recording Godard, however, Hyperion would surely have included Godard's other piano concerto (No 2 in G minor) rather than the (albeit) entertaining *Symphonie orientale* (1884). Hardly a symphony, these five short verse-inspired tone-poems representing Arabia, China, Greece, Persia and Turkey might well be mistaken for prescient, deftly scored works by German, Ketèlbey or Coates. An altogether delightful disc of world-premiere recordings. Jeremy Nicholas

Grieg

'Complete Symphonic Works, Vol 2'
Two Elegiac Melodies, Op 34.
From Holberg's Time, Op 40.
Two Melodies, Op 53. Two Nordic Melodies, Op 63
WDR Symphony Orchestra, Cologne / Eivind Aadland
Audite (**)
AUDITE92 579 (52' * DDD/DSD)



Volume 2 of Cologne's Grieg cycle arrives

A happy star reigned over Cologne two autumns ago when violinist-turned-maestro Eivind Aadland recorded his cycle of Grieg symphonic works with the city's WDR orchestra. Aadland – his name, we are told, means 'land at the river' – explains in his notes to the project his own familial and geographical affinity with Grieg's affection for folk and dance music. In this collection of (mostly) string-orchestral arrangements of songs and piano originals actions certainly speak as loud as his words: the bite and bounce of the German orchestra's playing is remarkable for its apparent ethnicity.

This lack of the borrowed German romanticism that still cloaks much non-Scandinavian Grieg-playing - the composer portrayed as a kind of simplified Brahms with the Hungarian bits writ Nordic - does not indicate any lack of passion. The uberrestraint which characterised Ole Kristian Ruud's Bergen survey of this music is replaced here by a real evocation of the sadness - perhaps darkness would be a better word - behind Grieg's melodies and themes. A weighty and tense interpretation of From Holberg's Time gives the lie to the composer's none-too-serious apology for the work as 'periwig music' - a kind of 18th-century mask to his own emotions - and attains a dramatic level more suggestive of the plays and writing of Ludvik Holberg than most rivals. The song transcriptions, none more so than the Melody, Op 53 No 1 (retitled 'Norwegian'), are lent here an importance far beyond that of the salon encore material as which they are often scheduled.

In this series (three releases to come) or as a separate venture, Aadland and his adoptive orchestra must be let loose on as complete as possible a *Peer Gynt*. Almost singlehandedly these days he continues to make the case for Grieg as serious orchestral writer.

Mike Ashman



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- WholeNote Magazine, Canada, September 2011

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> - Anthony Tommasini Chief music critic for The New York Times



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METRONOME

Kilar

Piano Concerto^a. Choral Prelude. Orawa ^aPeter Jablonski *pf*

Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra / Wojciech Rajski
Dux (F) DUX0708 (51' • DDD)

Recorded 1998



Kilar's signature score Orawa heard with his Piano Concerto

Best-known for soundtracks to such films as *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and *Portrait of a Lady*, Wojciech Kilar's concert music is finally receiving the recognition it deserves, with this disc the fourth in a series on the Dux label. And about time too: the composer will be turning 80 next year.

Whereas previous releases grouped together works which share common themes, this latest offering is more diverse in scope, ranging from the folk-inspired Orawa (1986), via the reflective, religiously tinged Choral Prelude (1988, both for string orchestra), to the postmodern eclecticism of the Piano Concerto (1997). The two works from the 1980s signal the composer's departure from avant-garde concerns to a pared-down, essentially consonant language, often incorporating the effect (employed by others, such as Górecki) of gradually layering and accumulating musical material. This technique evokes the rugged monumentalism of the mountainous Polish landscape that so inspired Kilar's work over the years. But it is perhaps in the Piano Concerto that a radical simplification in style and technique comes dangerously close to what Adrian Thomas once described as 'spuriously kitsch'. One is either drawn into this deceptively naive sound world or repelled by it.

This is a fascinating introduction to Kilar's style and aesthetic. Quality of recording and performance are admirable, with Jablonski's piano-playing and the orchestra under Rajski imparting equal quantities of lyricism and viscerality to proceedings. If Kilar's music is under-represented in the West, they play it with an assuredness and intuition acquired through years of familiarity. Pwyll ap Siôn

Koppel

Sinfonia Concertante for Violin, Viola, Clarinet, Bassoon and Orchestra^a. Concerto for Flute, Harp and Orchestra^b. Tuba Concerto^c

^bKlaus Ettrup-Larsen f/ ^aRandi Østergaard c/ ^aSheila Popkin bn ^cMattias Johansson tba ^aYana Deshkova vn

^aAnna Maria D Dahl va ^bMette Nielsen hp

Aalborg Symphony Orchestra /

Matthias Aeschbacher

Dacapo (F) 8 226052 (69' • DDD)



A portrait of Dane Anders Koppel in concertante mode Son of Hermann D Koppel (known to specialist collectors as both pianist and respectable composer), Anders Koppel is an engaging figure on the Danish scene. He has found his way through experimentalism and rock back to something not so far removed from his father's neo-classicism, at least if these three *concertante* works from the first decade of the 21st century are at all representative. They may be comparatively modest in their demands on players and listeners but they are by no means trivial. High-class contemporary *gebrauchsmusik* is their niche, and there is no backhandedness intended in that compliment.

The *Sinfonia concertante* is rooted in the asperity of Stravinsky's Octet, Violin Concerto, *Ebony Concerto* and so on. Lacking their fiendish glee, irony and concentration, it is nevertheless attractively scored and manages to think effectively on its feet.

For all its apparently arcadian scoring, the Concerto for Flute and Harp touches greater depths, and not only in the Elegia. The preceding, Griegian Intermezzo could happily find its place as the soundtrack to a wistful 1950s French film, while the finale brings in antique cymbals and slide whistle without suspicion of gimmickry or even incongruity.

The Tuba Concerto may have none of the aspirations of a major work such as Kalevi Aho's Concerto (2007), and it makes none of the Finn's excessive demands on the instrument. But it is by no means entirely predictable, despite frequent glances at the conventional buffoonery of the genre. A short *misterioso* interlude nestles in neatly between the more playful outer movements.

By the end of the disc I did find that Koppel's compulsion to return to the tonic triad was beginning to pall, and I would love to hear him stretch his talents to more ambitious projects. But these beautifully performed, admirably recorded works still make a more than welcome introduction to his art.

David Fanning

Mahler



Michelle DeYoung mez Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh; Children's Festival Chorus of Pittsburgh; Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra / Manfred Honeck Exton © ② SOCL00450 (103' • DDD/DSD • T/t) Recorded live at Heinz Hall, Pittsburgh, June 2010



After their well-received Prom, Mahler's Third from Pittsburgh

In sonic terms this is right up there with Chailly's Decca-engineered version as the most ear-popping in the current catalogue. The great cinemascopic vistas that are summoned up by those eight unison horns at the start are quite remarkable

for their depth, breadth and thunderous immediacy. Manfred Honeck (clearly a Mahlerian to reckon with) and his engineers are especially impressive in catching the gaudy splendour of the first movement, with huge contrasts achieved between the lowering opening paragraph - where yawning trombone glissandos are more startling than I've ever heard them - and the fragrant green shoots of the emergent spring sweetly characterised by the Pittsburgh Symphony concertmaster. The orchestral playing is pretty tremendous throughout but especially in this first movement, where the Pittsburgh brass are mighty indeed. The Ivesian 'rabble' do their worst to raucous effect and I do so admire the journey that the solo trombone makes from craggy belligerence to poetic valediction.

Mahler's flora and fauna then take centre stage, the former charming and pellucid, the latter duly robust, with ear-stretching distance for the magical offstage posthorn solos. On the controversial issue of the nocturnal cries from oboe and cor anglais in the *misterioso* Nietzsche setting, Honeck takes my view that Mahler's direction 'drawn upwards' for the repeated semitone is intended as an expressive indication, not a literal 'slide' or *portamento*. Michelle DeYoung intones darkly.

The children's chorus could for me be raunchier greeting the morning bells but, as their quirky bell-chime imitations fade from our hearing, the great *Adagio* emerges in wonderfully hushed consolation. On this point, is it not shocking that the early Bernstein account – still something of a classic – is still, I believe, only available in a packaging which splits the final two movements over two CDs, thus destroying Mahler's dramatic *segue*? Does no one check these things? It is clearly marked *attacca*.

Honeck's finale is reverential in the best sense, perhaps not quite achieving the highly personalised intensity of the Bernstein or the sheer luminosity of Chailly and the Concertgebouw. But he and his Pittsburgh players certainly assume the ascendancy with a series of heart-easing turns of phrase. The final pages are illuminating, not overbearing.

More than a little special, then, in marvellous sound. That could be the deciding factor for many. **Edward Seckerson**

Selected comparisons:

G G)

Lipton, NYPO, Bernstein (12/62[®]) (SONY) SM2K61831 Lang, RCO, Chailly (8/04) (DECC) 475 5142DX2: 59 470 652-2DSA2

Mahler

Symphony No 5

London Philharmonic Orchestra / Klaus Tennstedt ICA Classics ⓒ ஊ ICAD5041 (76° • NTSC • 4:3 • LPCM stereo • 0) Recorded live December 1988



Mahler

Symphony No 3

Waltraud Meier mez

Eton College Boys Choir; London Philharmonic Choir; London Philharmonic Orchestra / Klaus Tennstedt ICA Classics (M) (2) ICAC5033 (101' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Royal Festival Hall, London, October 5, 1986





Tennstedt with his beloved LPO on screen and on tape

For a time Klaus Tennstedt (1926-98) seemed destined to become EMI's next 'Grand Old Man', a less worldly, less cerebral East German substitute for Otto Klemperer and his ilk in the central repertoire. Sadly ill health and bad luck put paid to the strategy. Even so, a Mahler cycle was completed in the studio and today's release schedules attest to the conductor's continuing fascination with a clutch of live relays, some previously released in alternative formats, others wholly new.

The Mahler Fifth Tennstedt directed in December 1988 at London's Royal Festival Hall was an emotional occasion, coming the year after he had felt obliged to step down from his post as the London Philharmonic's principal conductor. EMI issued it on disc (12/89) and the BBC filmed it. Visually and sonically it has worn well and aficionados should not hesitate. Even they may not be convinced by the opening pages, which exhibit a not uncharacteristic tentativeness, but then Tennstedt concerts often began this way, acquiring grander, looming intensity as the ailing conductor drew strength from the music he loved. This is not the spick and span, vibrato-lite Mahler somewhat in vogue today. Awkward corners must have been apparent at the time (though not always to the diehard fans for whom expressive authenticity was everything) and students of the mechanics of conducting may not find much to wow them now. There's none of the fluidity (and public show) of a Bernstein or a Kleiber, yet something special is going on, especially when the stick is discarded for much of the longbreathed, old-world, unashamedly subjective Adagietto. Elsewhere orchestral sonority is not always grateful, brass deliberately cussed, almost sour, woodwind blended without creaminess, strings digging in deep. Little joy to be found in a generally deliberate, troubled reading of what is normally a darkness-tolight piece. The DVD comes with a detailed booklet but no 'extras'. The back cover assures us that this acclaimed performance was the last time Tennstedt returned to work with these players. Not so, although it must

have been the last time he returned with them to this particular score.

The audio-only Third, captured a couple of years earlier in marginally happier times, projects a sense of struggle which here seems more aptly attuned to Mahler's intentions. In the Nietzsche setting of the fourth movement the soloist is a young Waltraud Meier yet to essay dramatic soprano roles. Already she contributes more than the statutory stoical poise. While the accompanying bird cries are implausibly discreet, no one could accuse Tennstedt of a merely superficial overview. Exuding integrity, his finale is again straightforward, by no means unduly slow. Fortunately the sound is good. The brief bonus item features the conductor in conversation with a much-missed Gramophone contributor.

'Big sounds, big rubatos, big everything.' That's how Edward Seckerson summed up Tennstedt in the Sixth (LPO, 8/09). As with Barbirolli, only more so, there are lumps and bumps aplenty, individual lines freighted with a weight of nuance threatening to upset the conceptual apple-cart. Before receiving his honorary Oxford doctorate in 1994 Tennstedt conducted a one-off rehearsal, bidding his students to 'Remember the fingerboards. Vibrato. Romantic vibrato'. How should we rate him in 2011? Over to you.

David Gutman

gramophone.co.uk

Mahler

Symphony No 9



The LSO's 'in-house' Mahler cycle arrives at the Ninth

You have to hand it to the indefatigable Valery Gergiev. Not since Herbert von Karajan's remarkable ascendancy over the cultural institutions of the early 1960s has a classical musician wielded such clout. Fifty years ago the type of artistic relationship he enjoys with the LSO might have been sealed with a Beethoven symphony series taped in the studio by a 'major'. These days, with Mahler ruling the roost, it's no surprise to find the team's powerfully projected London Mahler cycle immortalised, albeit on ownlabel SACDs.

Gergiev, who first attempted the Ninth in the Barbican Hall in June 2008, returned to the microphones last March. His conception remains pushy, extrovert and darkly opaque, the horns glowering menacingly even in moments of repose, timps apt to be thwacked with vigour, violins antiphonally placed but contributing to a generous, solid string sonority. The band displays both its corporate dexterity and its famous ability to play very loudly indeed. Surface detail is tangibly immediate, the vivid yet shallow sound stage reinforcing the impression that we are listening to a brilliant concerto for orchestra with obbligato grunting from the

podium. Who then is the composer? Some hitherto undiscovered Soviet pupil of Hindemith, perhaps...

Of course, such an interpretation will have its admirers – never boring, half-hearted or indecisive - and the inner movements should convince even if they are neither graceful nor perceptibly Viennese. There have been brisk finales before, Bruno Maderna's with the BBC Symphony Orchestra being among the most pliable. While Gergiev elicits some heroic playing, he is oddly stiff, offering little sense of a composer trying to emancipate new worlds of feeling. For me the music's unique emotive force is finally harried into extinction. You may feel differently. There are full notes from Stephen Johnson and (a routine aspect of LSO Live presentation particularly welcome here) no intrusive applause at the end. David Gutman Selected comparison:

BBC SO, Maderna (8/06) (BBCL) BBCL4179-2

Mahler

Symphony No 10

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra / Mark Wigglesworth

ABC Classics ® ABC476 4336 (78' • DDD)
Recorded live at the Arts Centre, Hamer Hall,
Melbourne, November 2008



Wigglesworth follows decent live Tenths with an ABC record

Conductors, especially British ones, who study the Tenth early on tend to become determined champions. Mark Wigglesworth has performed

Well schooled: the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in Mahler

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The Sixteen go digital

There's a great advantage to being a 'late adopter': you can see where others went wrong and make all the necessary improvements without having to go through countless relaunches. Coro, the record label of The Sixteen, has just unveiled its own digital store (and very nice it looks too), and it does all the things you might expect from such an enterprise. Of course, it helps not to have a vast catalogue to deal with (though Hyperion got things pretty well spot on when it launched its own store, and with a sizeable offering), and Coro makes the most of the focus and quality we've come to expect from Harry Christophers's splendid choirs (his work with Boston's Handel and Haydn Society also appears on Coro). Files are available in four different formats: AAC (256kbps) and MP3 (320kbps) or losslessly as ALAC (Apple's lossless format) and FLAC. Pricing is reasonable, ranging from £7.99 for the lower-rate formats to £10 for the lossless, and rather unusually you can download all four for £15. So, if choral music done well appeals, check out thesixteendigital.com

Cincinnati fanfares

Everyone likes getting something for nothing and to mark Paavo Järvi's last season with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and also Cincinnati's classical radio station WGUC's 50th, the orchestra has made available a series of six specially commissioned fanfares for free download. The composers include Erkki-Sven Tüür, Jörg Widmann and Stewart Goodyear. All were recorded in concert earlier this year and all can be accessed at cincinnatisymphony.org

Podcasts hit the jackpot

A quick thank you to subscribers of *Gramophone*'s podcasts, especially our series devoted to the Awards nominations during the months of July and August. You helped increase our monthly downloads from about 1500 in June to 19,600 in August (and that doesn't include the couple of thousand people who have listened to them in the *Gramophone* Player). So don't forget, you can listen to *Gramophone* as well as read it! Find full details at **gramophone.co.uk** or search for 'Gramophone magazine' in iTunes's podcast section. **James Jolly**

the Tenth regularly since a BBC Symphony Orchestra concert in 1991 brought him wide attention. A 1993 Nottingham concert with the BBC Welsh, issued on a magazine CD, won plaudits, as did their Amsterdam performance for the gathering of the Mahlerian clans two years later. This live Melbourne performance carries a little more timber but it's consistent with a vision of the piece that was clear and distinctive over two decades ago.

The breadth and deeply etched conviction that mark out his Shostakovich dignify this Tenth with the status not of an edgy step (taken by Rattle, Sanderling and others) into a sometimes bracing new world but a retrospectively fitting culmination to an assured, and assuredly symphonic, career in music. With Wigglesworth, you can hear late Schubert in the pawky gait of the 'Purgatorio', and the Fifth Symphony in the two scherzos. You won't hear any of the percussion added to Cooke's completions by the pair already cited but plays of exhilaration and disconcertion can still be relished here through the pure energy of the playing, which has its rocky patches (such as the start of the second movement) but hardly any rough edges; if there is a Wigglesworth sound, the Melbourne orchestra are well schooled in it.

The huge bass drum punctuations of the finale, louder than ever, have transcended their origins in the funeral of a New York fireman to adumbrate a gathering of creative resources no less bold than, but apparently modelled on, the example of Beethoven's Ninth (and Bruckner's Fifth). Accordingly, the big tune presents less of a brief and breathtaking mirage than the start of an intricately worked finale-argument; and its eventual, chorale-like transformation in the strings after the recrudescence of the first movement's crisis brings fulfilment, not resignation. The recording, like the performance, benefits from a healthy sense of perspective.

Peter Quantrill

Mozart

Piano Concertos - No 6, K238; No 8, 'Lützow', K246; No 9, 'Jeunehomme', K271

Mantua Chamber Orchestra / Angela Hewitt pf Hyperion F CDA67840 (75' • DDD)



Hewitt joins an Italian band for nicknamed Mozart concertos

Modern instruments they may be but horns in B flat *alto*, exultant in the first movement of K238, signal an important point: you don't need to feel cheated of period attack or timbres. The Orchestra da Camera di Mantova – violins separated – is a refulgent band, closely recorded though. Some distance would have lent enchantment too. Yet it's easy to be captivated. Concertmaster

Carlo Fabiano doesn't simply lead his forces mechanically; he gives meaning and expressive weight to the orchestration, Angela Hewitt the experience of valuable thought and feeling.

The slow movement, Andante un poco adagio, perhaps a little slower than expected, is but an example of how she thinks and feels. Instantly noticeable is her strong left hand, varying the intensity and accentuation of the triplets to match her shapely treatment of the melody. Hewitt is as touching here as she is graceful in the Tempo di menuetto of K246, a captivating movement that here precedes Mozart's lofty Jeunehomme Concerto, K271.

It's a high point. An opening movement, of grand utterance from these musicians, shows that Mozart was maturing artistically. The *Andantino* in C minor, seen in a light of grave beauty, is the deepest yet from him. And a *Presto* finale, with a minuet in the middle, is as startling as the piano entry in the second bar of the first movement. But in Hewitt's hands this is no artless dance; instead, something profound, as you'd expect of her – and get.

Nalen Anthoni

Penderecki

Symphony No 4, 'Adagio'

Polish Sinfonia Iuventus Orchestra /

Krzysztof Penderecki

Dux ® DUXO822 (31' • DDD)

Recorded live at the IJ Paderewski Pomeranian
Philharmonic Concert Hall, Bydgoszcz,
September 2010

Penderecki

Viola Concerto^a. Cello Concerto No 2^b
^aGrigori Zhislin va ^bTatjana Vassiljeva vc
Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra / Antoni Wit
Naxos § 8 572211 (58' + DDD)





Two Polish ensembles offer orchestral Penderecki

As one of the most prominent defectors from the avant-garde in the 1970s, and as one of the most award-decorated composers alive, Penderecki is a must-know figure for anyone interested the contemporary musical scene. Whether the music deserves its reputation is not a question easily answered, however.

Despite its subtitle, the Fourth Symphony is far from being entirely, or even predominantly, slow. It is true that large tracts of it are taken up with brooding monologues. But the problem is that even the faster music that surrounds them feels slow – in its thought-processes rather than actual tempo. Every phrase and paragraph seems to take the most clichéd path it can find.

Nothing is held in reserve; nothing is ambiguous, or even intriguing. What was the Grawemeyer committee thinking of, I wonder, when it awarded the piece its prestigious award in 1992? Maybe it did not get beyond the pious intentions of the piece, a French government commission for the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution: to represent the 'dignity and destiny of the individual' (not 'unit', as Dux's extremely laborious, over-literally translated essay on the etymology of *Adagio* has it).

Dux announces the new disc as a Special Edition. In fact the only special thing about it is its outrageously short duration. The live performance, complete with appropriately lukewarm applause, is less clean and no better recorded than the composer's Wergo recording, which comfortably accommodates the Second Symphony in addition.

While the musical language of the Fourth Symphony is more or less that of pre-First World War Eastern Europe (Glière, Myaskovsky, Suk, Karłowicz et al), the two concertos on Naxos, both composed in the early 1980s, take as their starting point the gestural worlds of Shostakovich, Lutosławski and Schnittke. The Viola Concerto, though the shorter of the two pieces, is the more tedious. Once again predominantly portentous and apocalyptic in tone, it trudges around in circles, like the carrier of an 'End is Nigh' billboard, tragically convinced of the importance of his message. Rhythmically the writing is quite staggeringly devoid of character. The Second Cello Concerto is a different matter. This at least starts with an aura of mystery, which returns at the end with a sense of a meaningful space having been traversed in the meantime. The journey could hardly be called eventful but there are some passages that are least quite light on their feet, almost witty. Fine performances, and recordings that are a touch over-resonant but still perfectly acceptable, make the Naxos disc a useful library acquisition.

David Fanning

Sym No 4 – selected comparison: NDR SO, Penderecki (WERG) WER6270-2

Respighi

Concerto in modo misolidio^a. Fontane di Roma ^aOlli Mustonen *of*

Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra / Sakari Oramo Ondine (F) ODE1165-2 (54' • DDD)



Roman pictures in Helsinki with Respighi's modal concerto

There are only two other versions of the Concerto currently available, by Geoffrey Tozer and Konstantin Scherbakov on Chandos and Naxos respectively, neither of which I have heard. It is based on a medieval

JOHN NELSON SHINES SUPREME LIGHT ON TWO BELOVED SACRED MASTERPIECES.

Beethoven's Missa Solemnis and Haydn's The Creation

"Everything about the creation of the Missa Solemnis DVD was thrilling. We professionals who spend our lives making music are blessed to do what we do. But it is not every day that we experience everything coming together in a kind of perfection. This was that day."

- John Nelson, conductor

"I don't think there is any composer who had more of a sense of humor than Haydn. He was just naturally given to fun, to joy, to humor...and you find it all in this music"

- John Nelson, conductor







"I was absolutely moved and transported."

"I am in tearsit is so beautiful!"

"A superb performancea terrific sense of authenticity and life."

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plainchant *Viri Galilaei* (the Introit for the Mass of Ascension Day) written in one of the ancient church modes, number seven, the Mixolydian, which, I am sure you don't need reminding, is the scale of G major with its seventh (F sharp) replaced by an F natural. This underpins the entire work (36'32"), completed in 1925 and premiered by the New York Philharmonic under William Mengelberg in the same year.

Personally, I found it hard to get a handle on even after three hearings. Its amorphous form, constant internal shifts of rhythm and focus, and episodic nature managed to keep me at arm's length, admiring Respighi's craftsmanship but not, in terms of a satisfying concert experience, the work, described by one writer as 'stylised neo-archaic'. The slow movement is, perhaps, the most rewarding with its elegiac opening theme on the lower strings. Mustonen, with that chilly piano tone he prefers, is a fluent and committed soloist.

Fountains of Rome brings us to more familiar (and competitive) territory. Helsinki's House of Culture has a dry acoustic, allowing Oramo and his Finnish players to give us a highly atmospheric reading of exemplary clarity and, in the 'Trevi Fountain', powerful dramatic effect. But the warmer bloom of Rome's Sala Santa Cecilia with Antonio Pappano conducting the complete Roman Trilogy makes his version (EMI, 11/07) preferable.

Jeremy Nicholas

Röntgen

Violin Concertos - in A minor; in F sharp minor. Ballad Liza Ferschtman vn Rhineland Palatinate State

Philharmonic Orchestra / David Porcelijn
CPO ® CPO777 437-2 (73' • DDD)



The 'Röntgen Edition' arrives at the concertos for violin

Leipzig-born Julius Röntgen (1855-1932) was nothing if not prolific, his output of well over 500 works incorporating no fewer than 21 symphonies composed when he was a septuagenarian. All three *concertante* pieces on this disc were written after Röntgen had settled for good in the Netherlands (and where, in 1913, he was appointed director of the Amsterdam Conservatory).

In the A minor Concerto (1902) Röntgen's writing for the solo violin is consistently idiomatic and there are some felicitous touches of orchestration. Stylistically, there are echoes of numerous figures, among them Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saëns, Elgar, Grieg, Sibelius and Nielsen. More worrying, though, is the comparative dearth (to my ears, at any rate) of truly distinctive melody. Indeed, the most striking idea is a piquant harmonic sequence that initially appears at

5'12" in the first movement and crops up again periodically throughout the rest of the work. A likeable find, none the less, as is the 1918 Ballade, a 15-minute essay of (again) no mean fluency and imagination. The F sharp minor Concerto was written very swiftly in the last full year of Röntgen's life and bears a dedication to the charismatic Hungarian virtuoso Jelly d'Arányi (the lucky recipient of Ravel's *Tzigane* and Vaughan Williams's Violin Concerto). Its *Andante tranquillo* centrepiece contains much that is genuinely haunting but the concerto as a whole is let down by a disappointingly humdrum opening movement and fluffy, inconsequential finale.

The performances under David Porcelijn's watchful direction are wholly admirable; soloist Liza Ferschtman responds with both keen poetry and pinpoint accuracy. Sound and balance are also first-rate, and CPO supplies copious booklet-notes. However, as I've already intimated, the music itself is not really out of the top drawer. Andrew Achenbach

Schwertsik

Nachtmusiken, Op 104. Herr K entdeckt Amerika, Op 101. Baumgesänge, Op 65 BBC Philharmonic Orchestra / HK Gruber Chandos (E) CHAN10687 (60' • DDD)



Gruber takes the BBC Phil through his teacher's music

There was little doubt that, as Composer/ Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic, HK Gruber would tackle music by Kurt Schwertsik, his older contemporary with whom he has often been referred to as representing a 'Third Viennese School' embodying the ambiguity and equivocation once associated with musical postmodernism. The latest work here, Nachtmusiken (2010), is a 'symphonic serenade' where ghostly recollections of Janáček precede a nostalgic take on Viennese waltz music, then a plangent elegy for writer and publisher David Drew is followed by a 'Quick march' in which brusqueness turns to brutality; a pity, however, that the dutiful fugal writing of the 'Flight' finale seems relatively earthbound. Herr K entdeckt Amerika (2008) is a 'sonatina for orchestra' inspired by the anti-hero of Kafka's 'comic' novel as he crosses to the Big Country of his dreams, only to get caught up in doubtful shenanigans as a hotel lift-boy before joining the circus in Oklahoma. All quirkily depicted, yet the third movement, 'On the road', impresses the most in its evoking the Midwest as corollary to Kafka's alienated vision. Emotions become more overt in Baumgesänge (1992): six 'tree-songs', ominous and fraught by turns, culminating in a toccata with its aggressive spin on American minimalism. Gruber directs



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with conviction music he doubtless understands intuitively, while the BBC PO takes its many subtleties in its stride. Spaciously immediate sound, informative notes and a disc worth acquiring. Those who do can decide whether the music's 'subtexts' are an added incentive or rather the main reason for listening. Richard Whitehouse

Sibelius

Symphonies - No 6; No 7

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra / Pietari Inkinen Naxos § 8 572705 (60' • DDD)



The Finn in charge of the NZSO arrives at the Sibelian apex

Previous volumes in this series have been welcomed for their plain-speaking approach, and it's true that Sibelius hardly needs cosseting or prettifying. Inkinen knows these scores. The introduction of the Sixth opens out on a calm vista, viewed from afar, and the main *Allegro* gains momentum and confidence bar by bar: process is all in late Sibelius when (as in Beethoven) the melodies have been reduced to scraps of scales and piano-derived figures. The vista loses focus in the development section when the string ostinato goes from plain-speaking to merely prosaic. So do many woodwind lines throughout the disc.

The second movement is also unusually steady (6'19") in both tempo and temperament, without even the shadow of the dance, hardly warranting some sharp intakes of breath from Inkinen. Speeds in this movement range between Petri Sakari's leaden 6'58" and Lorin Maazel's edgy 4'03" (with the VPO) – Maazel's later recording in Pittsburgh and Oramo in Birmingham are on the mark at about 5'20".

Where Inkinen's approach achieves a certain noble eloquence in the finale, it falls badly flat in the Seventh, that symphony of continual evolution. The crucial timpani parts

Noble eloquence:
Pietari Inkinen
and the New Zealand
Symphony Orchestra
in Sibelius

often register as little more than dull thuds, and I think my lack of enthusiasm for the disc largely stems from the recording quality, which in the climaxes of *Finlandia* becomes quite constricted. The strings are too close for comfort, theirs and ours, and yet so are the winds. Hall size isn't an issue – the Michael Fowler Centre auditorium in Wellington seats 2200 – but an EMI disc of Wagner arias from the same venue with Simon O'Neill suffers instead from excessive distance. Peter Quantrill

Sym No 6 – selected comparisons: VPO, Maazel (2/92) (DECC) 430 7782DC3 Pittsburgh SO, Maazel (3/968) (SONY) 88697 80833-2 Sakari (A/00) (NAXO) 8 554387 CBSO, Oramo (A/038) (WARN) 2564 60294-2 For a review of this same coupling from the Gramophone Archive, see panel on page 55 (right)

Wagner

Meistersinger – an Orchestral Tribute (arr de Vlieger). Eine Faust-Ouvertüre. Deux Entreactes tragiques. Columbus – Overture Royal Scottish National Orchestra / Neeme Järvi Chandos (F). . CHSA5092 (80' • DDD/DSD)



Henk de Vlieger's orchestral impression of a masterwork

After The Ring – an Orchestral Adventure, Tristan und Isolde – an Orchestral Passion and Parsifal – an Orchestral Quest, Henk de Vlieger offers Meistersinger – an Orchestral Tribute as the last of his 'symphonic compilations' after Wagner. Five hours are boiled down to 48 minutes, and the overemphasis on C major jubilation created by the inclusion of the Act 1 Prelude and the Entry of the Masters from Act 3, plus the final celebratory affirmations, is as good an indication as you could get of the counterproductiveness of bringing so close together what Wagner had the good sense to keep well apart.

There is plenty of contrast in the other material, with the later stages of Sachs's Act 2 monologue spatchcocked on to the Act 3 Prelude and a voiceless version of the Quintet: and although it might be pedantic to complain about the nature of some of de Vlieger's joinery (the treatment of the ending of the Act 1 Prelude is the first questionable example), I was more disconcerted by Neeme Järvi's exceedingly brisk tempi in places where some degree of expansiveness is normally supplied - the chorale theme in the Act 3 Prelude, most notably, here rushed through in a way which completely ignores Wagner's marking, 'with great solemnity'.

No complaints about the RSNO's playing or the spacious Chandos recording. Listeners curious about how earlier arrangers have handled Wagnerian material can also sample Felix Mottl's Straussian edition from 1907 of the *Columbus* Overture (1835), along with de Vlieger's completions of two 'entr'actes' from 1832 and the relatively mature *Faust Overture* (1840) in Wagner's own 1855 revision. **Arnold Whittall**

Royal Concertgebouw Anthology 6: 1990-2000



Bartók Duke Bluebeard's Castle. Piano Concerto No 3 Beethoven Symphony No 6, 'Pastoral' Berio Sinfonia Berlioz Les nuits d'été Brahms Tragic Overture, Op 81 Bruckner Symphony No 3 Dallapiccola Liriche Greche per soprano e diversi gruppi strumentali **Debussy** Prélude à L'après-midi d'un faune Diepenbrock Hymne an die Nacht No 2. 'Muss immer der Morgen wiederkommen?' Dutilleux L'arbre des songes Elgar Symphony No 2 Feldman Coptic Light Hindemith Symphonic Metamorphoses after Themes of Carl Maria von Weber Ives Three Places in New England Loevendie Piano Concerto Lutosławski Concerto for Orchestra Mahler Symphony No 5 Martin Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments, Timpani, Percussion and Strings Messiaen Trois Petites Liturgies de la Présence Divine Mozart Symphony No 40, K550 Pijper Zes symfonische epigrammen Ravel Ma Mère l'Oye Schoenberg Verklärte Nacht, Op 4. Fie Orchestral Pieces, Op 16 Schreker Vom ewigen Leben Schubert Symphony No 9, 'Great'. D944 Schumann Fantasie, Op 131, for Violin and Orchestra Sibelius Symphony No 4 Shostakovich Symphonies - No 1; No 5 Strauss Tod und Verklärung Stravinsky Divertimento from 'Le baiser de la fée' Takemitsu A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden Wagner Rienzi - Overture Zemlinsky Symphonische Gesänge, Op 20

Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra

knows de trouble I see'

Conductors include Fischer, Sawallisch, Haitink, Fournet, Chailly, Previn, Tennstedt, Boulez, Jansons, Solti, Harnoncourt, Adams

RCO Live ® 4 RCO11004 (17h 15' • ADD/DDD)

BA Zimmermann Trumpet Concerto, 'Nobody



The boxed history of the RCO reaches its sixth volume

Hats off to the Royal Concertgebouw: this sixth instalment of their 'Anthology' crowns what is without doubt the most impressive (certainly the most representative) recorded retrospective of any orchestra ever undertaken on disc. During the course of 14 generously filled CDs we're transported from January 1990, when Iván Fischer led an uncommonly urgent account of Bartók's opera *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* (Kolos Kovács and Ildikó Komlósi) that predates his Philips version (same Judith but with László Polgár as Bluebeard, now on Channel Classics) by more than 12 years, to Gerd Albrecht conducting Schreker's atmospheric *Vom*

ewigen Leben (with Claudia Barainsky) in 2000. In between, there's the expected wealth of varied interpretation, all of it well worth preserving. True, André Previn opens Elgar's Second Symphony rather flabbily but soon enters into the spirit while the orchestra surveys the many subtle nooks and crannies of Elgar's narrative with genuine persuasiveness, especially in the first movement. Wolfgang Sawallisch plays straight and fair with Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, and Klaus Tennstedt delivers a patient, hefty, heart-onsleeve Mahler Symphony No 5 that in parts of the first movement comes across with devastating power. Bernard Haitink releases the full measure of fantasy in Ravel's Mother Goose ballet (not the rather pointless Suite, thank goodness) and Charles Dutoit holds us captive with Messiaen's entrancing Trois Petites Liturgies (Mark-André Hamelin is the pianist). Sir Georg Solti is responsible for a chipper Shostakovich Symphony No 1, very light on its feet and brilliantly played, and Paavo Berglund finds warmer weather than we're accustomed to in Sibelius's Symphony No 4.

Kurt Sanderling conducts two major symphonies, both of them with unflinching authority. In Shostakovich's Fifth Sanderling's slant is very much geared towards the weight of irony (the finale is positively gruelling), while Bruckner's Third, a long-term Sanderling staple, is broadly paced and lovingly played, especially by the magnificent Royal Concertgebouw strings. The less traditional guard of symphonic conductors includes Nikolaus Harnoncourt who offers an unexpectedly soft-option Brahms Tragic Overture and a Mozart Symphony No 40 where at the start of the finale's development section he mischievously inserts some rhetorical pauses (something he also does on his alternative CD versions). Sir John Eliot Gardiner transforms Schubert's Ninth into a very merry dance, with nifty tempi and memorably incisive phrasing. There's a typically rhapsodic Bartók Third Concerto from Martha Argerich (under a keenly collaborative Claus Peter Flor) and, from Riccardo Chailly, sensitive Zemlinsky (Symphonic Songs with Willard White), boisterous Hindemith (Symphonic Metamorphoses) and dreamy Diepenbrock (Hymne an die Nacht No 2 with Nathalie Stutzmann). Being the latest volume in the series there are, as might be expected, generous selections of newer music, including significantly radical works from near the beginning of the last century (Ives's Three Places in New England conducted by John Adams, for example), also Dallapiccola, Berio (the marvellous Sinfonia under the composer's own direction, and sounding more absorbing than ever), Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Martin,

Lutosławski, Feldman, Zimmermann, Loevendie and Dutilleux. The annotations are excellent and so, for the most part, is the recorded sound. It's not without reason that in 2008 *Gramophone* crowned the Royal Concertgebouw 'the world's greatest orchestra'. Three years on, and with this kind of evidence to hand, there's surely no valid reason to challenge this great orchestra's continued reign. **Rob Cowan**

'Fiesta criolla'

Caballero Concierto indio^a Carrillo Fiesta criolla. Rapsodia santiagueña JJ Castro Arrabal Holguín Tres Danzas Mignone Congada Piazzolla Milongón festivo A Williams Primera obertura de concierto ^aNora Chastain vn Württembergische Philharmonie Reutlingen / Gabriel Castagna

Chandos (F) CHAN10675 (77' • DDD)



Byways of South American repertoire explored

Having already issued vivid recordings for Chandos of relatively well known works by Piazzolla, Ginastera and others, Castagna now turns his attention to unfamiliar music by mostly unfamiliar names. Argentinians Piazzolla and Alberto Williams top and tail the programme with, respectively, Castagna's own 2009 orchestration of *Milongón festivo* and the lively First Concert Overture (1889).

In between comes a series of works from the vast hinterland of South American composition eclipsed by Villa-Lobos, Ginastera and Mexicans such as Chávez, Ponce and Revueltas. The composers were all born in the latter half of the 19th century, were influenced by contemporary French or Italian music (most studied in Europe) and had a keen awareness of Andean culture. The pick is Colombian Victor Uribe Holguín's Tres Danzas (1926, rev 1940), three sparkling gems that end well within their length. Brazilian Francisco Mignone's Congada is a dansa afrobrasileira originally conducted in Rio by Richard Strauss no less. The most substantial is Peruvian Theodoro Valcárcel Caballero's Concierto indio (1940), skilfully delivered by Roy Harris's granddaughter, Nora Chastain.

Holguín and Williams between them created 20 symphonies but the only symphonic repertoire is represented by Juan José Castro's highly rhythmic *Arrabal*, the opening movement of his *Sinfonia argentina* (1934). Manuel Gómez Carrillo's *Fiesta criolla* (1941) seems lightweight by comparison, although *Rapsodia santiagueña* (1922) is sturdier fare. All the pieces are performed with great conviction and receive vibrant recordings full of vim and vigour as befits their lively character. Chandos's sound is typically rich and clear. **Guy Rickards**

GRAMOPHONE Archive

October 1968: Karajan's Sibelius

As a new recording of Sibelius's last two symphonies arrives, we look back at an earlier review of a now familiar coupling

Sibelius

Symphony No 6. Symphony No 7 Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra / Herbert von Karaian

DG SLPM139032 (12in, 42s)

This account of the Sixth, the most deeply personal (and in some ways elusive) of the symphonies, is the first to appear in stereo. Although others are promised, this at present has the field to itself. Earlier releases in the series have not inspired undivided praises but have left no doubt that the view Karajan takes of Sibelius is a commanding one even if some of the contours we learned to recognise from the readings of, say, Kajanus and Koussevitzky are not so starkly delineated. Karaian, it will be remembered, recorded these two symphonies on a Columbia record. Now deleted, the earlier version had much greater body of tone and range as well as impact: the new disc is cut at a much lower level but even when suitable adjustment is made, the famous Berlin strings have a pallor and the brass a hollowness that one does not associate with recordings from this source. Fortunately the Seventh Symphony sounds a good deal better.

The performance of No 6 is in many ways eloquent and often impressive though his tempo for the first movement will not convince all readers and I am not sure that it does me. The orchestral playing is beautiful and the finale is just pushed along a little too urgently. Its resolution in the gloriously tranguil coda is somewhat less convincing given this view of the main body of the movement. The Seventh opens extremely promisingly and apart from a tendency to smooth contours here and there, I found much to admire. The second appearance of the great C major trombone theme and the preparation are magnificent but I was a little disappointed by his excessive sweetness in the Allegro molto moderato section.

However, I would imagine that for most readers the grotesque bassoon intonation would prove more than tiresome at each repetition. A pity, for this is a spacious and powerful reading as a whole and the great climaxes are handled with conviction and nobility. None the less the Maazel is the one to have and until his record of No 6 is released, I would continue to recommend Collins's plain but serviceable account on Decca Ace of Clubs.

Robert Layton, October 1968, page 72

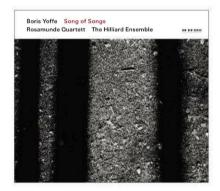
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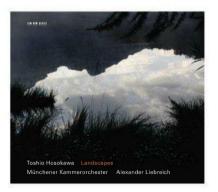












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SCREEN MUSICALS AND MOVIES

Adrian Edwards picks his favourite four from a recent batch of recordings taking their cue from the movie and TV screen



ohn Wilson's BBC Prom of MGM musicals in 2009 took the audience by storm with its electrifying display of music-making. It was subsequently released on DVD but some changes to the cast and tweaks to the running order ensure that this disc is no replica of that occasion, although equally inspired. It opens with Johnny Green's thrilling MGM Jubilee Overture, showing off the orchestra's prowess in an eight-minute arrangement of peerless tunes. Green's musical hallmark in a Main Title of segueing from one number to another at the flick of a wrist is evident in An American in Paris, played with all the swagger of the original. Likewise, in 'I got rhythm' from Girl Crazy, which opens with what sounds like a fractionally late fadein, Wilson and his orchestra give a truly virtuoso performance with Kim Criswell giving her all, as she also does in the exhilarating 'The Trolley Song'. Following in the footsteps of artists like Garland is no mean feat and no one here is found wanting.

These singers bring a refreshing slant to the originals. Curtis Stigers, in fine voice, the suave Seth MacFarlane, evoking shades of the big band vocalist Dick Haymes, and Matthew Ford each take turns as Gene Kelly with 'Love is here to stay', 'Singin' in the rain' and 'The heather on the hill' from *Brigadoon*. Stigers and MacFarlane as Crosby and Sinatra have sharpened up their repartee in 'Well, did you evah?',

suggesting a tipsy champagne moment amid the gaiety of that scene. Ford and the equally accomplished Sarah Fox are in glorious voice for excerpts from the operetta *The New Moon* by Romberg, a composer whose star has waned all too fast since the era of John Hanson. An accompanying DVD, shot

'The EMI team are to be congratulated on a production that captures so vividly a Hollywood sound stage'

in letterbox format, includes an interview with Wilson and his singers, and the CD booklet, a hardback de luxe affair, comes with chatty and informative notes by David Benedict. The EMI team of Andrew Cornall and Jonathan Allen are to be congratulated on a production that captures so vividly the excitement of a Hollywood sound stage.

The novel *The Snow Flower and The Secret Fan* might have been written with a Rachel Portman soundtrack in mind. The

story of a lifelong friendship between two girls in 19th-century China, hidebound by convention, who communicate in code, requires a finely nuanced score which is Portman's trademark. Her sympathetic understanding of their predicament is evident in the understated main theme, 'Lily meets Snow Flower', which develops into a slow waltz. The tune is accompanied by an assortment of ethnic and traditional instruments. As the full melody gradually unfolds and the tempo quickens, the effect is both beguiling and seductive.

Dario Marianelli approaches the latest big-screen version of *Jane Eyre* by portraying the heroine through the solo violin of Jack Liebeck. In a score of uncommon subtlety and restraint, dominated by strings, one senses Jane's presence from the moment the violin ascends from the bass resonance of the first cue, 'Wandering Jane'. Obsessive string writing underscores her fretting about her future in 'The call within'.

Moments of relief come in two piano solos, 'A game of badminton' and 'Life on the Moors'. The piano's rolling accompaniment to a lyrical string line in 'Waiting for Mr Rochester' resonates with moorland and birdsong. 'A restless night' cleverly evokes the claustrophobia of Thornfield Hall and its mad incumbent Bertha Mason, represented in a disembodied vocal line. Marianelli's music haunts the heart after the music stops.

The latest CD from Carl Davis's label features his suite for strings and harp adapted from Karel Reisz's film The French Lieutenant's Woman (1981) and his television music for Hotel du Lac and two costume dramas from BBC1, Pride and Prejudice and Cranford, both of them testifying to Davis's love of pastiche. The Philharmonia revel in the celebrated opening music to Pride and Prejudice, with Melvyn Tan, the keyboard player, now on piano rather than the original fortepiano. Davis offers an amusing sketch of the oleaginous Mr Collins, represented by a bumptious bassoon, and his patroness Lady Catherine de Bourgh by a stately sarabande in the style of Handel. In Cranford, Davis depicts the class distinction between two funerals, contrasting the homely music for a household maid with music of noble gravity for Lady Ludlow. @

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Chamber



Harriet Smith reviews Li-Wei Oin in Beethoven:

A consistent pleasure is his tone, from the warmth of the cello's lower register to the sweet-toned upper reaches' > REVIEW ON PAGE 59



Duncan Druce reviews viola sonatas by Brahms:

'In Rachel Roberts's hands the viola loses its Cinderella image'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 61

Arnell

String Quartets - No 1, Op 4; No 2, Op 14; No 3, Op 41; No 4, Op 62; No 5, Op 99 **Tippett Quartet**





Repertoire-thirsty Tippett

Quartet look to Arnell

The first three of Richard Arnell's six string quartets date from his sojourn in New York City. Composed in 1939, the single-movement First (an assured achievement for a 22-year-old) was premiered the following year by no less august an ensemble than the Galimir Quartet. Its successor from 1941 is similarly compact (12 minutes as against nine), with two vigorous outer movements framing a central *Andante con moto* of uncommon eloquence. Both the Third Quartet (1945) and meaty, one-movement Fourth (1950) likewise leave the listener in no doubt as to Arnell's command of the medium.

However, it's the remarkable Fifth Quartet from 1962 which leaves the most enduring impression, the last four of its seven pithy movements laid out successively for one, then two and three players before all four combine in a superbly terse finale. It was a work, incidentally, much admired by Hans Keller, himself the dedicatee of Britten's Third Quartet – which, curiously enough, Arnell's piece seems to foreshadow in many respects.

Suffice it to say, the Tippett Quartet perform with heaps of commitment and supreme technical accomplishment; indeed, it's hard to imagine this repertoire receiving more eloquent and understanding advocacy. Robert Matthew-Walker's exemplary notes and Michael Ponder's glowingly real sound add further lustre to yet another strongly recommendable release from those enterprising folk at Dutton. Don't hesitate for a moment.

Andrew Achenbach

Bartók

Bartók 44 Duos, Sz98 - No 6, Hungarian Song I; No 9, Play (two versions); No 13, Wedding Song; No 14, Pillow Dance; No 32, Dance from Maramaros; No 35, Ruthenian Kolomeika: No 38, Romanian Whirling Dance. For Children, Sz42 - No 31, Stars, Stars Brightly Shine; No 34, Romance: I Know a Little Forest. Hungarian Sketches, Sz97 - No 1, An Evening in the Village; No 3, Melody. Mikrokosmos, Sz107 - No 78, Five-Tone Scale; Three Dances in Hungarian Rhythm (Nos 149, 150 & 153). Romanian Christmas Songs, Series 1, Sz57. Romanian Folk Dances - No 1, Stick Game Traditional Cousin Sally Brown

Jake Schepps banjo with Ryan Drickey vn Matt Flinner mand Ross Martin, Grant Cody gtrs Ben Sollee vc Eric Thorin, Greg Garrison, Ian Hutchison dbs Fine Mighty Records (**) 1033 (47" • DDD)



Banjo aficionado reimagines Bartók

When the late, great Buddy Rich was being prepped for heart surgery near the end of his life, his anaesthetist asked if he was allergic to anything and every jazz fan knows his answer: 'Yeah, country and western music!'

Not for a second am I claiming that Colorado-based banjo wizard Jake Schepps's reimaginings of Béla Bartók have anything to do with Tammy Wynette or Kenny Rogers but there is a certain 'yeehaw' flavour to this music that, while inoffensive, doesn't do Bartók many favours. Sensibly, Schepps has stayed well clear of the Bartók of the string quartets or Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta; instead he has reworked chunks of Mikrokosmos, Hungarian Dances and the 44 Duos, implanting the inflections of bluegrass inside Bartók's patterns, rumprolling the rhythms and generally cranking everything out at a bright 'can do' tempo.

'Stars, Stars Brightly Shine' from For Children is an exception. It slows the pace, breathing with the grain of Bartók's plaintive melody, Ryan Drickey's violin grazing against blades of bluegrass plucking from banjo, mandolin and guitar. Elsewhere the relentlessly upbeat grooves and polished harmonies become too much of a cheerful earful, telling us more about idiomatic banjo- and guitar-playing than revealing any 'must hear' peculiarities about Bartók's harvesting of folk material.

Philip Clark

Beethoven · JS Bach

JS Bach Die Kunst der Fuge, BWV1080 Contrapunctus XI^a Beethoven String Quartet No 15,
Op 132^a. Cello Sonata No 1, Op 5 No 1^b

^aChristian Tetzlaff, ^aAntje Weithaas vns ^aRachel
Roberts va ^bGustav Rivinius, ^aTanja Tetzlaff vcs

^bAaron Pilsan pf

CAvi-Music ® 8553225 (72' • DDD)

Recorded live at the RWE Power AG Hydroelectric Plant, Heimbach, Germany, June 2010



Chamber greats from a Westphalian power station

Late Bach and Beethoven make compelling bedfellows, particularly when linked by the medium of the string quartet; these are live performances from one of the world's more unlikely venues, the Heimbach Hydroelectric Power Station, where Lars Vogt founded his annual festival in 1998. Thanks to its abstract qualities, The Art of Fugue has long been borrowed by diverse groups (as witness one of its most compelling interpreters, the Berlin Saxophone Quartet), of which the string quartet is one of the more natural media. The quartet, made up of siblings Christian and Tanja Tetzlaff, plus violinist Antje Weithaas and viola player Rachel Roberts, perform its central Contrapunctus XI, a virtuoso fourpart fugue on no fewer than three subjects, with spareness and intensity.

It is followed, very naturally, by Beethoven's Op 132 Quartet. They take less time over the opening than the Takács but have a refined intensity that is akin to that of the Hagen. You're acutely aware that this is a quartet of individuals, each player highly responsive to the others, conveying the rhythmic tensions of the second movement and the Alla marcia to great effect. But it's in the slow movement that the heart of this work lies, its 'Hymn of Thanksgiving' represented by its archaic opening material (which links back in mood to the Bach). No modern-day quartet can quite touch the Takács here in its sustained intensity offset by an almost frolicsome joie de vivre as the D major central section reaffirms the potency of the life force, but the contrast between austerity and warmth is very well conveyed here, as is the

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incessant propulsion of the finale. The applause comes as something of a shock, so quiet have the audience been.

We end with early Beethoven, the First Cello Sonata, played by Gustav Rivinius and the teenage phenomenon Aaron Pilsan. It's high on adrenalin and more of a partnership of equals than the Li-Wei Qin/Albert Tiu duo (reviewed below), even if Qin does possess the more innately beautiful tone. I particularly like the way they go for the finale, which isn't in any way brash but conveys absolutely the bold energy of Beethoven's music at this time. Harriet Smith

Beethoven Op 132 – selected comparisons:

Takács Qt (5/05) (DECC) 470 849-2DH3

Hagen Qt (A/05) (DG) 477 5705GH

For reviews of Beethoven's Op 132 Quartet from the Gramophone Archive, see panel (right)

Beethoven

Cello Sonatas - No 1, Op 5 No 1; No 2, Op 5 No 2; No 3, Op 69; No 4, Op 102 No 1; No 5, Op 102 No 2 **Li-Wei Qin** vc **Albert Tiu** pf Decca $\textcircled{$\mathbb{B}$}$ ② 889 9119 (67' • DDD)



A Chinese cellist and his Filipino pianist in Beethoven's sonatas

Cellist Li-Wei Qin, born in Shanghai and educated in Australia and the UK, offers a highly accomplished Beethoven sonata cycle with pianist Albert Tiu. A consistent and particular pleasure is Qin's tone, from the warmth of the lower register to the sweettoned upper reaches, soaring into the stratosphere apparently without effort.

These are readings that are largely content to let the music speak for itself - which can be a good thing. The opening of Op 69, for instance, is less interventionist than Müller-Schott's, who has, in Angela Hewitt, a pianist who tends to play up the brilliance of the piano-writing to a greater extent than Tiu. Where the Qin/Tiu duo are perhaps less convincing is in movements such as the same sonata's driven Scherzo, which demands the most instinctive interplay, with Tiu a touch reticent here, though Müller-Schott and Hewitt are arguably too rushed; both partnerships misjudge the brief Adagio cantabile that follows: extreme slowness does not equate to profundity. Far more convincing in the overall pacing and impact of this sonata is the 1947-48 Fournier/Schnabel reading, and I'd urge you to seek out this classic cycle: Fournier's warmth and unobtrusive virtuosity, plus the odd portamento, are a profound pleasure, while no pianist understands the music better.

In the late sonatas, too, Qin and Tiu don't always reveal the centre of the music as some do, notably the linked slow movement and finale of Op 102 No 2, with gravity leading to

a playfulness that is undermined by more cataclysmic moments. Here the emphasis tends to be on the music's lighter elements.

So, intensely likeable performances without perhaps making you feel that they're shedding new light on these eternally engaging masterpieces.

Harriet Smith

Selected comparisons:

Müller-Schott, Hewitt (12/08, 5/10) (HYPE)

CDA67633, CDA67755

Fournier, Schnabel (EMI) 629539-2

E Bennett

Cartoon Music^a, for JF^b. Ghosts^c. Monster^d. My Broken Machines^a. Slow Down^e. Stop-Motion Music^a ^dPaul Roe bc/ Garth Knox va

^bConTempo Quartet; ^aDecibel; ^eFidelio Trio NMC ® NMCD169 (74' • DDD)



Bennett with seven works for soloists or small ensemble

There's a vein of power minimalism running through Irish composer Ed Bennett's work that troubles me. Listening to the supersmart, conceptually refined *Slow Down* (2011) – music for piano trio never sounded like this before: violin and cello crawl along open string *glissandos* as pianist Mary Dullea probes the inside of her instrument; harmonies are made thrillingly unstable – I wonder why Bennett needs the crude gesturing I hear in his ensemble pieces *My Broken Machines* (2004) and *Stop-Motion Music* (2010).

Stop-Motion Music, he says, borrows a technique from animation: stop-motion filming switches still images into life by rapidly flicking the camera on and off, distorted repetitions that Bennett also links to the inner movement of Bridget Riley paintings. But all I hear are loops of harmonically inert blocks underpinned by hi-hat and cowbell grooves – written-out funk, a trick killed off by Turnage and Martland 25 years ago.

Listen harder, the mystery deepens. Stop-Motion Music has its moments. Preliminary pitch-wavering trombone and electric guitar figurations blossom again during the final moments as glissandos jolt the music out of its notated groove. Monster (2005) for bass clarinet and electronics pits real-time playing against a diced-up doppelgänger bass clarinet on tape; the structure is continually on the fly. Thrilling. But then for JF (2007) attempts to transmute macho, cock-rock guitar fuzz to an acoustic string quartet and slips into impotent parody. Ghosts (2008) for unaccompanied viola d'amore is Bennett back to his best, writing a piece for Garth Knox that rebounds out of the instrument's resonant natural harmonics. Ed Bennett - true or false? Philip Clark

GRAMOPHONE Archive

Beethoven Op 132

A survey of classic reviews of Beethoven's A minor quartet from Gramophone's archive



SEPTEMBER 1957 Hungarian Quartet Columbia © 33CX1460 (12in, 41s)

In criticising records it is all too easy to lose sight of the fact that it is the music that matters most. and it must be said that for anyone whose aim is to get to know some of the greatest of all chamber works these performances will give endless pleasure. On this final disc the Hungarian Quartet offer what is for the listener a work of some difficulty, with a rather dry Scherzo and a very long, sustained slow movement. The Hungarian Quartet try to relieve the strain...These players cannot bring themselves to play Beethoven's slowest and most sublime music as he wanted it. though they nevertheless make some of it sound very beautiful. But generally speaking the ensemble, attack, and technical proficiency of this quartet are beyond praise; and, slow movement apart, so is their grasp on the music.



APRIL 1965 Czechoslovak Quartet Supraphon **©** SUC10247 (12in, 15s)

In this quartet all depends on the great slow movement which Beethoven wrote as a thanksgiving for his recovery from an illness. Playing of a special intensity is called for, and though the notes are easy enough this is an extremely hard movement to bring off. The Czechoslovak String Quartet seem insufficiently aware of the emotional problems. The faster-thanusual tempo helps to give a certain superficiality to the playing, and even when the quartet meet the words 'Mit innigsten Empfindung' over the final section they remain comparatively unmoved. Elsewhere they are more percipient, playing the second movement with effective restraint. The little March is perky, and I enjoyed the rather unusual approach to the finale.



SEPTEMBER 1984 Fitzwilliam Quartet Decca 411 643-1DH

This thoughtful performance has much to recommend it. In the dominating slow movement the players risk a slower tempo, and this is symptomatic of the committed intensity with which they play. I like too the way the Fitzwilliam players make the second movement into a leisured meditation, not attempting an extreme contrast with the surrounding movements. The ensemble might enjoy a digital recording but, alas, it is not of the best. The contrast between ff and pp is much greater than you ever hear in live performance and the biggest climaxes sometimes sound unpleasantly aggressive.

Reviews by Roger Fiske

Read articles in full at the Gramophone Archive: **gramophone.co.uk** ▶



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Piano Concertos Nos.1 & 2 Fantaisie pour piano et orchestre

MARTIN ROSCOE **BBC Concert Orchestra** MARTIN YATES

CDLX 7275

After the success of Dutton Epoch's recording of Benjamin Godard's piano concertos, Dutton Epoch's International Series now revives the delightful piano concertos of Charles-Marie Widor, stylishly played by Martin Roscoe. Written during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Widor's

piano concertos were performed by several of the finest French pianists of the day, yet for some unaccountable reason have dropped from the repertoire. This is not heavy romantic material but delightfully and colourfully scored music. The First Concerto from 1876 is lyrical, exhibiting an almost Chopinesque pianism. Equally as enchanting is the Fantaisie pour piano et orchestre, which pianist Martin Roscoe treats with his customary singing touch. But this is a varied programme, and in the Second Piano Concerto of 1905 we find Widor essaying music that more closely integrates soloist and orchestra. All in all this is a memorable and many-sided musical journey.

CONVERSE

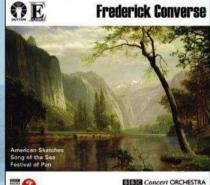
Song of the Sea **Festival of Pan American Sketches**

BBC Concert Orchestra KEITH LOCKHART CDLX 7278

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The American composer Frederick Shepherd Converse was a leading name in American music up to the Second World War. It was Converse who composed the first American opera, performed at the Met in New York. Yet despite being widely heard in his day, after his death in 1940 he

STANLEY



was soon eclipsed by the new generation of Copland, Harris, Barber and their contemporaries. His revival is long overdue, vividly demonstrated by this programme of colourful orchestral tone poems - the four movements of American Sketches from the late 1920s, the early Festival of Pan (after a Keats poem) and the evocative Song of the Sea, a tone poem after Whitman. Whether you respond to the lyricism of the Festival of Pan and Song of the Sea or the varied scenes of American Sketches, this is enjoyable music to which you will return time and again.

MOERAN

Sketches for Symphony No.2 Realised and completed by Martin Yates

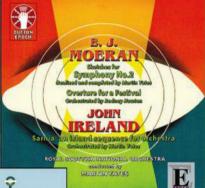
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Violin Concerto Elegy, Waltz and Toccata

Royal Scottish

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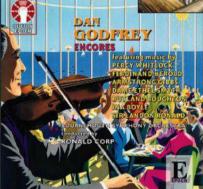
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'Pipings and Blowings'

Blackford Concerto for Recorder and String Quartet^a **Hurd** Violin Sonata^b. Five Preludes^c. Sonatina^d. Three-Piece Suite^a **Milford** Prelude, Op 92^c. Three Airs, Op 109^d. Fantasia, Op 74^e. Sonatina^d. Christmas Pastoral^d

ad John Turner rec ^bRichard Howarth vn ^{bcd}Peter Lawson pf ^{ae}Manchester Chamber Ensemble Métier ® MSV28522 (73' • DDD)



Three forgotten Britons profiled in varied ensemble creations

This recital brings together a sequence of 10 brief works by three British composers, in music above all designed to please rather than challenge. Michael Hurd (1928-2006), after studying at Oxford, held various musical posts before deciding to divide his time between composing and writing books. For a time he studied with Lennox Berkeley but his music is markedly more tuneful than that of his mentor, always easily lyrical with most of his works here ending with a jauntily attractive finale. The three-movement Violin Sonata is the most substantial work, ending with the longest movement, a set of free variations, the concluding one the most light-hearted. The Five Preludes for piano are charming miniatures, nicely contrasted, leading to the Sonatina for recorder and piano, with a central songful slow movement and jaunty finale. Similar in layout but even more compact is the Three-Piece Suite for recorder and string quartet, dominated by the recorder.

Robin Milford (1903-59) was the son of Sir Humphrey Milford, founder of the music department of Oxford University Press. He studied at the Royal College of Music under Holst and Vaughan Williams, and became a close friend of Gerald Finzi. Many of his works were designed for children either to play or to hear, and with his connections his music was regularly published by OUP. Yet he suffered from depression and the death of his only son along with the remaindering of all his published music led him to commit suicide.

The immediate attractiveness of most of the works bears out their aptness for children, though the Fantasia for string quartet (1946) is an exception, a deeply felt work, just over seven minutes long, composed as a memorial on the death of his mother. That he could write such a carefree work as his Three Airs for recorder and piano not long before his suicide seems in total contrast with his depressive temperament, as do the other two works for recorder, the Sonatina and *Christmas Pastoral*, also written not long before his death. The final work

on the disc, the Concerto for recorder and string quartet by Richard (here described as Dick) Blackford (b1936), is in effect a three-movement work framed by a brief Prelude and Postlude. Manchester-trained, Blackford has spent most of his career teaching, contributing music when projects for his pupils demanded it. The Concerto has a mysterious slow movement with a central scherzando section, leading to a dazzling finale full of virtuoso fireworks before the measured Postlude.

Performances are first-rate from the soloists, notably the recorder player John Turner, who displays astonishing feats of tonguing in fast passages, as well as from the string quartet of the Manchester Chamber Ensemble, led by Richard Howarth. Not surprisingly, the sound tends to favour the recorder. Edward Greenfield

Brahms · Schumann

Brahms Viola Sonatas – No 1, Op 120 No 1; No 2, Op 120 No 2 Schumann Märchenbilder, Op 113 Rachel Roberts va Lars Vogt pf CAvi-Music ⊕ 8553181 (60' • DDD)



Brahms's sonatas for clarinet in their familiar viola guise

Though Brahms's Op 120 Sonatas were composed for clarinet and piano, they belong just as firmly to the viola repertoire. In making alternative versions Brahms took considerable trouble in adapting the viola part, adding occasional double stops and fitting the music to the instrument's generally lower tessitura. It's rather surprising, then, to find Rachel Roberts, in the first movement of the Second Sonata, reverting in places to the clarinet version, when Brahms has put the viola line down an octave. Lawrence Power demonstrates how fine these passages can sound when played as the composer intended.

However, this is a small matter in the context of some exceptionally beautiful, searching performances. Compared to Power and Simon Crawford-Phillips, Roberts and Lars Vogt adopt more spacious tempi. For example, in the Andante with variations that closes the Second Sonata, their initial speed may seem slightly slow but they do keep the music moving, and when they get to the third variation with its demisemiquavers, the playing is truly grazioso, as marked. Vogt has a wonderful way of making the textures crystal clear without sounding dry, and he produces more subtle and extensive variations of touch and tone than Crawford-Phillips. Roberts and Vogt together demonstrate a command of idiomatic rubato - for instance, in their freely expressive playing of the theme of the First Sonata's slow movement. And in Rachel Roberts's hands the viola quite loses its

Cinderella image, nowhere more so than in the *Märchenbilder*; impressively agile in the third piece, wonderfully warm and rich in the closing lullaby. **Duncan Druce**

Brahms - selected comparison:

Power, Crawford-Phillips (5/07) (HYPE) CDA67584

Cardew · Frey· Malfatti · Rowe

'Ø'

Cardew Solo Without Accompaniment Frey Exact
Dimension Without Insistence Malfatti nariyamu
Rowe Pollock '82 Rowe/Malfatti Improvisation
Keith Rowe tabletop gtr/elec Radu Malfatti elec
Erstwhile Records ® © 060-3 (157' • DDD)



Two iconoclasts question what underpins sound and structure

Since the dawn of modernism – make that since the dawn of any activity that those involved were minded to label 'music' – most creative journeys have been concerned with defining 'lots'. Notes, lots of them, and lots of surface activity held together with lots of deep structural underpinning. Even early minimalist pieces such as Terry Riley's *In C* or La Monte Young's *The Well-Tuned Piano* were actually about intensifying the materiality of music – lots of repeated notes, lots of structural engineering, lots of maximilist statements.

But working outside this usual new music narrative has been a lineage of composers, performers and thinkers who are interested in 'nothing'. Cage's 4'33" is to this negation of sound matter what The Laughing Cavalier is to Classical portraiture, and one of the musicians featured here, the trombonist, composer and improviser Radu Malfatti, was an early associate of the Wandelweiser network of composers and performers, whose aesthetic concerns spilt out of 4'33". Malfatti is a gadfly spirit: he kicks Helmut Lachenmann in interviews for brown-nosing tradition and recently suggested that, when it comes to sounds, where they are placed is more important than what they are. Malfatti's message seems clear: improvised and composed music have been trading off the same old same old textural splucks, blops, sucks, plops, blips and splops for too long, but the possibilities of structure are infinite.

Keith Rowe lays his guitar flat, plucking or bowing strings with one hand and manipulating electronics and radio signals with the other. He pioneered 'table-top guitar' back in the Sixties and, unlike Malfatti, remains smitten with texture and timbre. The symbolically titled 'Ø' finds them working out their aesthetic differences in compositions by themselves, by Cornelius Cardew and by Jürg Frey, before a 50-minute improvisation tests what they've learnt. *Exact Dimension*

Without Insistence, by fellow Wandelweiser composer Jürg Frey, makes Malfatti's point entirely. Enclosed by thundering silence, Malfatti plays cycles of three low Fs that Rowe answers with the G a ninth higher: there's no content, only structure. But as Rowe rips into, disrupts in fact, Malfatti's nonchalant, deadpan sustained tones in Cardew's Solo With Accompaniment, a new sort of discourse opens; Pollock '82, a graphic score, provokes the bloodiest encounter, with Rowe's high-velocity but willowy muted sounds worrying the fabric of Malfatti's playing. The improvisation is epic, the logicality of its temporal progress at telling odds with the inscrutable impulsiveness of the sounds...and the silences. Philip Clark

Holbrooke

Violin Sonatas – No 1 (Sonatina), Op 6a; No 2 (Violin Concerto, 'The Grasshopper'), Op 59. Horn Trio, Op 28^a . Mezzo-Tints, Op 55 – No 2, L'extase

Kerenza Peacock vn a Mark Smith hn

Robert Stevenson pf

Naxos (§) 8 572649 (75' • DDD)



Peacock and Smith take on Holbrooke chamber works

Aware that Joseph Holbrooke was a prominent, prolific composer in the early part of the last century, I was curious to hear these pieces. All the performances are of a high standard, often brilliant and imaginative, and I was particularly impressed with Kerenza Peacock's lithe, elegant violin-playing and her easy conquest of the virtuoso demands of The Grasshopper. I can't, however, summon much enthusiasm for the music - well crafted, generally amiable but not succeeding in developing the individual, engrossing musical world that such contemporaries as Delius, Vaughan Williams or Frank Bridge do. Most enjoyable is the Sonata No 1, an unassuming, lively piece with classical references, like a more difficult (but less memorable) Dvořák Sonatina. The best parts of the Horn Trio are the beginning and end of its slow movement a beautiful melody, admirably conceived for horn. The serene mood returns at the close but the music's development seems purely decorative, evoking a faded romanticism. The outer movements are energetic, with an atmosphere of somewhat forced jollity.

The Grasshopper exists in alternative versions, as violin concerto and duo sonata. The keyboard-writing sounds like a genuine piano part, not an orchestral reduction, but even so the work represents an uneasy compromise; virtuoso tricks à la Sarasate seeming excessive in this chamber-musical context. Once again, the best moments come in the middle movement, where Holbrooke

abandons his generally restless tonality and allows his ideas to develop in a natural way. **Duncan Druce**

Liszt

'Works for Violin and Piano, Vol 2' Rapsodie hongroise No 12, S379a. Die Zelle in Nonnenwerth, S382bis. Two Waltzes, S126b. Duo sur des thèmes polonais, S127. La notte, S377a. Walther von der Vogelweide, S345/3a^a

Friedemann Eichhorn *vn* **Rolf-Dieter Arens** *pf* with **aUwe Stickert** *ten*

Hänssler Classic (F) CD98 634 (54' • DDD)



Liszt Academy staff play the composer's own rethinks

Liszt's relatively small output of chamber music is, like the majority of what he wrote, rarely programmed in the concert hall and familiar only to Liszt aficionados. Most of these six works for violin and piano (the seventh is a song for tenor with violin obbligato) merit a place in a recital but, the musical value aside, one can only wonder anew at Liszt's industry and creative energy in revisiting his earlier works 'to rewrite them from a different point of view' (Leslie Howard in his erudite booklet).

Thus we hear a 'rethinking' of the celebrated Hungarian Rhapsody No 12 for solo piano now with a violin part written in collaboration with Joseph Joachim, far more than a mere transcription. Liszt's song 'Die Zelle in Nonnenwerth' exists in several versions, the present one not published until last year. The brief Zwei Walzer date from 1823 when Liszt was 11. The most substantial work (19'29") is the Duo sur des thèmes polonais (S127, 1835), also known as the Duo in C sharp minor, based on Chopin's Mazurka Op 6 No 2 and a Polish melody of unknown origin. 'La notte', the second of the Trois Odes funèbres for orchestra, appeared in versions for solo piano, violin and piano, and piano duet.

Eichhorn and Arens, professor and director respectively of the Liszt School of Music in Weimar, transcend any pedagogical preconceptions in meticulously prepared performances that are completely attuned to Liszt's idiom, flamboyant (but never flashy) when they need to be, and giving due weight to the introspective side of Liszt's multifaceted genius. Jeremy Nicholas

Mozart

String Quartets, 'Prussian' - No 21, K575; No 22, K589: No 23, K590

Emerson Quartet

Sony Classical (F) 88697 93598-2 (75' • DDD)



Mozart's sometime maligned quartets for a royal patron

'A rather pathetic sequence of three, emotionally on a far lower plane than any of the six works dedicated to Haydn' was an early-20th-century opinion of these quartets. The Emerson String Quartet don't do much to refute the tenet. Their aim, to 'strive for elegance, beauty and style', results in interpretations that are technically impeccable and immaculately presented but also subjectively neutral.

Unlike the Jerusalem and Klenke quartets, unconstrained in expressive capacity, the Emersons fight shy of reaching beneath the surface. The style they speak of emerges as bloodless, probably exacerbated by an acoustic that curtails the natural vibrancy of the instruments, and a recording that negates their wish 'to imitate the human voice, ranging from the most intimate pianissimo to a full sonority when appropriate'. The opening movement of K575 begins at a level too high for sotto voce which narrows the dynamic swing from soft to loud, and narrows the range of feeling in K589 too. These barriers to full communication are however eased for K590, where less restricted sound shows the group in a better light.

Polished playing is now complemented by improved tonal gradations and more yielding phrasing in both the first and third movements. If the slow movement is businesslike, played *allegretto* rather than *andante* as stated (either is right depending on the edition used) it is balanced by the most beguiling performance of all, a playfully wrought finale. Nalen Anthoni

K589 – selected comparison: Jerusalem Qt (5/11) (HARM) HMC90 2076 K590 – selected comparison: Klenke Qt (PROF) PH04031

Mozart



gramophone.co.uk



String Quartets - No 15, K421; No 19, 'Dissonance', K465. Divertimento. K138

Quatuor Ebène

Virgin Classics (F) 070922-2 (71' • DDD)



After quartets French and German, the Ebène do Mozart

A delicately breathy sotto voce at the beginning of K421 presages promise. Often this opening isn't inward enough and sometimes the tempo is too fast for Allegro moderato. The Quatour Ebène trust Mozart's directive; and Otto Jahn's belief that this dusky movement is also an 'affecting expression of melancholy' makes sense at this pace. Their modes of expression play a crucial role too. These musicians bend and straighten, relax and tighten with micro-dynamic changes. All are intuitively sensed and go beyond literal obedience to the written markings. Yet pulse is steady and nothing is piecemeal or dislocated. Individual

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character comes first though. The Minuet is very forcefully played. Constanze, who was having their first baby, thought some passages suggested birth pangs. But the Trio, in the tonic major, is slower, solicitous, with rubatos critically timed. Interpretation is always carefully thought through and heartfelt. Turn to K465 and hear the *Adagio* introduction paced to give the 'false relations' their due, the contrasts in the main *Allegro* properly stressed and the element of *cantabile* in the slow movement most lyrically expressed.

There is a level of respect here that also extends to the Divertimento, early but not considered trivial. The *Andante* alone shows the same care and attention that is lavished on the mature music. Sound is good, though the first violin is often strident. Much more seriously, the ensemble is entirely right-orientated with no separation. These performances deserve the best engineering. **Nalen Anthoni**

Onslow

'Complete Piano Trios, Vols 3 & 4'
Piano Trios - Op 3 No 1; Op 3 No 3; Op 14 No 1;
Op 14 No 3; Op 20; Op 26
Trio Cascades
CPO
© CPO777 232-2 (150' • DDD)



More from George Onslow in two further volumes of trios

CPO is a great champion of the second-rate and the Anglo-French composer George Onslow, born 14 years after Beethoven and dying three years before Schumann, is a splendid specimen of the species. We've reached Vols 3 and 4 of his piano trios and they continue to hold the attention with their sheer variety, something which is emphasised by Trio Cascades' nonchronological programming. Onslow certainly knew how to charm his listeners, be it in the variations of the Op 20 Trio or the second-movement Allegro of Op 3 No 1. There are hints of the influence of other composers: the shadow of Beethoven looms over Op 26, particularly its first two movements, the one strong and taut, the second a grave Adagio, while the Minuet of Op 20 is deliciously Mendelssohnian, though its witty interplay and lightness of touch are relatively underplayed in this performance.

And herein lies the main caveat: secondrate music needs first-rate advocacy and, while the performances are unquestionably seriously intentioned, the Trio Cascades isn't up there with the finest (if only the Florestan had been tempted to record a selection before they disbanded). The violinist in particular isn't always tonally secure and the three players lack a certain spontaneity,



a confidence, in their interplay which means some of Onslow's more novel effects pass for relatively little. This is particularly noticeable in the underplaying of the harmonic swerves of the finale of Op 20, the relatively tame last movement of Op 3 No 1 – which would benefit from greater risk-taking – and more assertive piano-playing in the *Allegro vivace assai* of Op 14 No 3.

The seriously intentioned notes are thorough, if in places idiosyncratically translated. This is an interesting starting point for some compelling music but it doesn't tell the whole story. Harriet Smith

Pizzetti

String Quartets - No 1; No 2 **Lajtha Quartet** Naxos

8 8 570876 (65' • DDD)

From Marco Polo 8 2223722 (4/96)



The only recording of Pizzetti's quartets resurfaces

Fifteen years after its release on Marco Polo, this remains the only recording of Pizzetti's quartets, by a Hungarian ensemble who apparently disbanded shortly afterwards. They don't sound happy playing together: unreliable tuning speaks louder than hindsight. Maybe the First Quartet of 1906 would shake off a sleepy, blatantly Dvořákian air at quicker tempi; probably not. From more than a quarter of a century later, the

Second contrives to be still more conservative. The first movement's development section slides around on a slick of chromatic oil – Pizzetti doesn't sound convinced, never mind the players – and even the determined note-writer calls the second movement turgid.

If you wanted to rebut Massimo Freccia's charge that the music of Pizzetti is 'basically boring', I don't think you'd start here. The Piano Trio and Second Violin Sonata present if not a more personal voice, then a determined melodist offering chamber opera for players to enjoy without the high-flown plainsong origins or dense counterpoint of the orchestral works. Pizzetti's Requiem attracts good choirs; his chamber music evidently needs impassioned advocacy.

Peter Quantrill

Reich

0

Different Trains^a. Piano Counterpoint (arr Corver)^b. Triple Ouartet^a

bVincent Corver pf aLondon Steve Reich Ensemble EMI (© 087319-2 (55' • DDD)



Reich's UK representatives in his staple creations

There's no chance of the London Steve Reich Ensemble competing on equal terms with their New York mothership's sense of 'this is our music, hear us play', their actually 'being there'. On disc, this matters more GRAPHY: VIRGIN CLA

GRAMOPHONE NOVEMBER 2011 63

than on stage. In live performance, in London or anywhere else, the London Steve Reich Ensemble deliver crack, rhythmically idiomatic, Steve-endorsed performances of music that requires greater insider knowledge of Reich's methods, and the sounds he expects, than his notation can convey; having absorbed the lessons, the ensemble are Reich's representatives this side of the Atlantic. But CDs are global beings and the LSRE need to make a case about why we need 'London' performances when Reich's own group, and ensembles like the Kronos Quartet, have already made 'definitive' recordings.

Their solution: dive inside Reich's scores, rethink what's actually there, make recordings that radiate authority - primers that anyone wanting to know about Different Trains or Triple Quartet needs to hear. And if you think I'm about to pull that wayback reviewer's trick of declaring clarity at the cost of sonic warmth and character, you're dead wrong. Triple Quartet, as played here, has an inner buzz that makes the Kronos sound faceless and corporate; compare and contrast the LSRE's tenacious syncopated attack and the resonant depth of those low cello sustains with the Kronos's narrow expressive bandwidth. There's joy in the detail. It becomes a better piece.

In Different Trains, too, inordinate care has gone into cross-balancing the melodies Reich extracted from recorded speech samples against the original samples, which bind foreground and background at a deep structural level. Piano Counterpoint is a reimagining of Six Pianos for one pianist playing against the other five parts on prerecorded tape. Personally I like the unwieldiness of Reich's original vision. But Vincent Corver's alert rhythmic pounce again demonstrates two nations unified by a common language. Philip Clark

Different Trains - selected comparison. Kronos Qt (6/89R) (NONE) 7559 79176-2 Triple Quartet - selected comparison: Kronos Qt (4/02) (NONE) 7559 79546-2

Reich

WTC 9/11a. Mallet Quartetb. Dance Patternsc ^cJames Preiss, ^cThad Wheeler vibs ^cFrank Cassara, Garry Kvistad xylos Edmund Niemann, Nurit Tilles pfs aKronos Quartet: bSo Percussion Nonesuch (F) (2) (CD + (CD + 7559 79645-7 (37' • DDD) DVD contains performance of Mallet Quartet



Vintage Reich, with his new commemoration of 9/11

It's not surprising that composers feel drawn to commemorate shattering events taking place in their midst - it goes back to Thomas Tomkins's A Sad Pavan for these Distracted

Times on the death of Charles I. Before his World Trade Center 10th anniversary commemoration, Reich wrote Different Trains (1988), in which he connected his own coastto-coast journeys between divorced parents in his childhood and the trains taking Jews to Hitler's concentration camps.

This time the use of manipulated speech in WTC 9/11 goes back to Reich's beginnings with pieces based on tape loops in It's Gonna Rain and Come Out in the mid-1960s. The scraps of speech in the new piece come from air traffic controllers and bystanders near the World Trade Center on that fateful day. There are three string quartets, recorded by the Kronos and superimposed, and prerecorded singing voices. The whole piece is a chilling recollection. There is nothing emollient about the quartet sound and quite rightly not a whiff of sentimentality.

Mallet Quartet (2009), in the version for two marimbas and two vibraphones, takes us back to the celebratory repetitions of vintage Reich but on an unusually short time-scale. Dance Patterns (2002) was written for a film by Thierry de May and is even more relaxed, with some jazzy syncopations. Altogether a fascinating look at recent Reich, attractively packaged - it's all over inside 40 minutes but there is also a DVD of Mallet Quartet included. Peter Dickinson

Shostakovich · Tchaikovsky



Shostakovich Piano Trio No 2, Op 67 Tchaikovsky Piano Trio, Op 50 **David Trio**

Stradivarius (F) STR33861 (77' • DDD)



Award-winning Italian ensemble take on intimate Russian trios

For all its imposing dimensions and grandiose final apotheosis, there is something fundamentally intimate about the Tchaikovsky Trio. As such it demands both larger-than-life technical accomplishment and the chamber musician's instinct for sharing rather than grandstanding. That, at least, is the message that comes from this startlingly fine new disc. The David Trio has garnered a number of prizes and residencies since its foundation in 2004 but it was a new name to me. Without going in for extreme tempi or displays of temperament, the players get far deeper beneath the surface of the Tchaikovsky than most of their rivals on disc. Maybe some will find that individuality is accompanied by an exaggeratedly halting quality, and effective balance by some dryness and emaciation in the piano's textures. But the gains in terms of individuality of voice and in sheer clarity are real, and throughout there is a quality of sympathetic warmth so essential to Tchaikovsky that it comes as a shock to

realise how few manage to nail it. In the second movement there is some heavy punctuation of phrases and fussy emphasis on subsidiary voices in the theme and some of the earlier variations. Even so, the level of idiomatic insight is high enough that it would take the length of several reviews to do justice to it. In short, this goes close to the top of my favourite recordings of the piece, alongside the superbly efficient Bronfman, Lin and Hoffman, not far short of the irresistibly fiery Argerich, Kremer and Maisky, and unrivalled for inspiration and abandon – the live Barenboim, Zuckerman and Du Pré.

The Shostakovich, too, is a fine achievement. Shifts of tempo and character that others negotiate only with uneasy compromise are here completely convincing. Obvious surface excitement gives place to a grasp of archetypal depths that demand restraint and wisdom as much as they do temperament. Most impressive of all is the matching of tone-colour to mood, so that the fragility of the opening phrases and the stoicism of the Passacaglia are captured with rare precision. The end of the scherzo could have done with a retake to eliminate a stray resonance that gives an unwanted minormode colour. And at the climax of the finale I do regret the over-riding of the score for what should be the muted return of the first movement theme. But so many ensembles take this option that I may have to give up complaining about it, and overall the balancesheet is overwhelmingly positive. David Fanning

Tchaikovsky - selected comparisons: Zukerman, Du Pré, Barenboim (7/85R) (EMI) 365224-2 Lin, Hoffman, Bronfman (9/94) (SONY) SK53269 Kremer, Maisky, Argerich (10/99) (DG) 459 326-2GH

Van Eyck

'Around Jacob Van Eyck'

Van Eyck Der Fluyten Lust-hof - excs Anonymous Amarilli mia bella. Come again. Daphne. Den Nachtegael Dowland Come again. Lachrimae antiquae/Flow my tears Gastoldi La sirena Sweelinck The Nightingale. Puer nobis nascitur Uccellini Ouesta dolce sirena Ardalus Ensemble / Karen Ketels recs Phaedra (F) PH92068 (71' • DDD)

Van Eyck

Der Fluvten Lust-hof - excs Johannette Zomer sop Ensemble Armonia e Invenzione / Luis Beduschi recs Eloquentia (E) EL1126 (69' • DDD)





Van Eyck from recorder players Belgian and Brazilian Jacob van Eyck is known only from Der Fluyten Lust-hof, two volumes containing some 140 unaccompanied variation-sets for soprano recorder, published at Amsterdam starting in the mid-1640s. While the pieces have been successfully recorded unaccompanied – many times – both these CDs flesh out the music: most of Van Eyck's variations were based on extremely popular tunes known throughout Europe and many other versions of them exist.

'Around Jacob van Eyck' (a carefully chosen title, because there is fairly little here taken directly from Van Eyck) is the debut CD of the Ardalus Ensemble from Belgium, led by their recorder player Karen Ketels, amply supported by percussionist and keyboard player Jan Devlieger, lutenist Nathalie Fransen, violist Rebecca Lefèvre and violinist Stefaan Smagghe. They take a variety of approaches: percussion, improvised bass-lines played on a viol, a bit of folk-fiddle and so on. In a few cases they introduce the original songs, sung with beautiful precision by the soprano Sarah Adams.

'Pleasure Garden' is unashamedly to promote the recorder virtuosity of the Brazilian player Luis Beduschi. Although the Dutch soprano Johannette Zomer gets equal billing, she is always far less prominently recorded, as indeed are the backing group of five viols, a virginal and a harp. Beduschi's playing is indeed astonishingly impressive, particularly in his ability to play unbelievably fast without any sense of struggle or unclarity.

But he is far more systematic in each approach. Essentially every piece is presented in the same way: five-voice accompaniment derived from other sources (many of them English); and a text taken from one of the many Dutch-language songbooks of the 17th century. If it seems bizarre to be hearing Dowland and other English songs in Dutch—with superimposed recorder variations—the approach is at least original and consistent. David Fallows

'Fierce Tears'

T Davies Forgotten Game (2)^a. Arabescos Woolrich The Kingdom of Dreams^a. The Turkish Mouse^a M Berkeley Fierce Tears^a – I; II. Second Still Life^b MacMillan In angustiis II C Matthews Night-Spell^a PM Davies First Grace of Light

James Turnbull ob ^aHuw Watkins pf ^bClaire Jones hp Quartz © QTZ2081 (69' • DDD)



James Turnbull's survey of new British music for oboe

New music for oboe has not been lacking in Britain over the past three decades and James Turnbull's recital makes for a welcome conspectus. Only two works feature the instrument unaccompanied but Peter Maxwell Davies's piece is among his deftest and most affecting miniatures, while James MacMillan's

11-minute solo is an eloquent memorial to the dead of 9/11 that takes the oboe to its limits both technically and expressively. Colin Matthews offers a haunting nocturne, while John Woolrich contributes a resourceful suite of miniatures inspired by Paul Klee paintings – at its most imaginative in the whimsical asides of 'Tale à la Hoffman' – with a transcription of his own song 'The Turkish Mouse' a sequel (in the context of this recital) of nonchalant poise.

Tansy Davies is represented here by a pair of substantial pieces that view the oboe from two wholly different perspectives. Arabescos emerges slowly in terms of its emotional impact and also its dialogue with the piano, while Forgotten Game (2) focuses on a restricted range of notes and rhythms as these instruments attempt to outwit each other in a witty and inscrutable process. Of the Michael Berkeley pieces, the Fierce Tears brace pays homage to the oboist Janet Craxton and more restrained yet no less intense in manner - the composer's father. Huw Watkins is a model accompanist, with Claire Jones equally committed in the other-worldly Second Still Life. A notable debut for Turnbull, who also contributes an informative note and has been well recorded.

Richard Whitehouse

'Sounds and Silence'

'Sounds and Silence - Travels with Manfred Eicher'

A film by Peter Guyer and Norbert Wiedmer

ECM

276 9886 (87' • NTSC • 16:9 •

DD 5.1 and 2.0 • 0 • s)



A road-movie biopic of ECM founder Manfred Eicher

This fascinating film, which has already won the 2009 Berner Film Prize, is the result of Peter Guyer and Norbert Wiedmer having followed Manfred Eicher, founder and presiding genius of ECM, round the world for five years, filming him and ECM recording artists in a variety of situations. If it seems somewhat hagiographical, that's because it is – why would you follow anybody with a camera for five years unless there were a very good reason to do so?

We see Eicher essentially in the role of guru. He is seen slumped in a chair in a bare room, absorbed in what he is listening to, before the sequence switches rapidly to car headlights on the autobahn near the ECM office – a refrain during the course of the film – and in recording sessions, nodding, whispering to composers and performers. It all sounds tremendously pretentious but the recordings have spoken for themselves, so it is obvious that filming a visionary capable of bringing Keith Jarrett, Charles Lloyd and Thomas Zehetmair to the same label might conceivably be interesting, or



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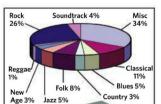
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possibly revelatory. What we are given is a series of glimpses into recording sessions in which Eicher has played a vital role, on site and, subsequently, determining balances and phrasing, as well as more prosaic moments in the ECM offices during which cover photographs are discussed.

We see him in Estonia, recording (and waltzing!) Pärt with Tõnu Kaliuste, speaking of the luminosity of the sound he seeks, in Greece with Karaindrou (who says 'he is also a poet'), and then also with Jan Garbarek and Kim Kashkashian, in discussion with Dino Saluzzi and Anja Lechner about entering into a particular piece. We also see Anouar Brahem recording, and discussing the war in Lebanon and the building and the losing of ouds, Gianluigi Trovesi recording and talking about his Profumo di Violetta and in an amusing set-up train journey with accordionist Gianni Coscia, Marilyn Mazur making a recording in Copenhagen, and a lovely sequence of Lechner's visit to Argentina to work with Saluzzi.

The English subtitles are extremely good (with the exception of a spectacular gaffe during an interview with Saluzzi: 'With which soldiers do you wish to purchase the crowing of a cock?'), and the film is visually very beautiful indeed.

Ivan Moody

'Guitar Passions'

Albéniz Asturias Jobim Chovendo na roseira^d
Mangoré Allegro^a. La catedral Mello O Presidente^g
Montana Porro Pixinguinha Carinhoso^e Ramirez
Alfonsina y el mar Rodrigo Concierto de Aranjuez Adagio^c Sinesi Sonidos de aquel dia^b Wilson/
Wilson Dreamboat Annie^f
Sharon Isbin gtr with ^aSteve Vai, ^bStanley Jordan,

^cSteve Morse, ^{cd}Romero Lubambo gtrs ^eRosa Passos

voc ^fNancy Wilson gtr/voc ^fAnn Wilson voc

^{cg}Paul Winter ssax ^gGaudencio Thiago de Mello perc Sony (£) 88697 84219-2 (57' • DDD)



Isbin gathers her friends for musical exploration

Purists might baulk at the Adagio from Rodrigo's Concierto de Aranjuez segueing into a wild bossa nova or an electric guitar line running wild through the rapid Bachian figurations of the Allegro solemne from Barrios's La catedral. But the purity of friendship trumps that of mere convention every time, and so it proves here as classical guitarist Sharon Isbin teams up 'my guitar heroes, artists that I admire from the classical, rock and jazz worlds, many of whom have been great friends and performing partners', in repertoire ranging from Rodrigo to rock. Indeed, the only 'pure' work on the disc is La catedral, Isbin's intense performance of which ends the disc (the aforementioned duo version of the work's Allegro with rock guitarist Steve Vai working the distortion pedal hard comes halfway through the programme); the only other 'classical' solo is Segovia's transcription of Albéniz's Asturias.

All the works on the disc are 'inspired by South American and Spanish roots', so the dominant flavour is Latin. Nevertheless, the programme displays all the diversity of a Brazilian rainforest, both in terms of instrumentation (the nylon string guitars of Isbin and Romero Lubambo; the electric guitars of Steve Vai, Stanley Jordan and Steve Morse; the vocals of Nancy Wilson and Rosa Passos; the soprano sax of Paul Winter; the 'organic' percussion of Gaudencio Thiago de Mello) and style (Spanish, Columbian, Argentinian, Brazilian; classical, jazz, rock).

The result is less a *paella mixta* than a true symphony of hearts and minds built on the

cantus firmus of Isbin's passion for musical friendship.

William Yeoman

'Hispania & Japan'

'Dialogues'

Anonymous O gloriosa domina. Improvisations on 'O gloriosa domina'. Quod Eva tristis II. Tu regis alti ianua III. Patri sit paraclito IV. Rangyoku. Vilancico, 'Senhora del mundo'. Alba & Rotundellus. Honnôji. Diferencia I on 'O gloriosa domina'. Shino no netori. Ave María. Reibo Henestrosa Hymn XX, 'O gloriosa domina' Narváez Diferencia II on 'O gloriosa domina'

Hespèrion XXI; La Capella Reial de Catalunya /
Montserrat Figueras voc/gtr, Jordi Savall viols with
Ichiro Seki shakuhachi Yukio Tanaka voc/biwa
Hiroyuki Koinuma shinobue/nokan Masako Hirao bvio
Ken Zuckerman sarod Prabhu Edouart tablas
Alia Vox (F) ... AVSA9883 (60' • DDD)



Savall opens a musical dialogue between Japan and Spain

In many ways a sequel to 'Road to the Orient' (1/08), tracing the travels of St Francis Xavier, this delicately beautiful recording brings together Savall and other members of Hespèrion XXI and the Capella Reial de Catalunya with Japanese musicians whom he met on the occasion of the earlier recording. It is released in benefit of the Japanese Red Cross, following the recent disasters in Japan.

This kind of crossover recording is very often unsuccessful because two groups of musicians are recorded talking - or playing past each other, with little or no genuine interaction. That is not the case here, however; the mixture of western monophony and polyphony with some profoundly beautiful improvisations on them by the Japanese musicians is illuminating and unexpectedly rewarding. They grasp the modal structure of the chant O gloriosa domina, for example, and absorb it into their own performance tradition, on their various instruments, so that both are clearly audible. This means also that the Western variations upon the theme, by Narváez and Henestrosa and the vihuela player Xavier Díaz-Latorre, seem part of this exotic but seamless flow.

The Marian theme is continued with the Portuguese Senbora del mundo (a ravishing performance by Montserrat Figueras which includes sarod and tablas) and a pentatonic Chinese Ave Maria which, though lovely, is in fact the piece that stands out quite obviously from all others here; but the real connection throughout is the extraordinary beauty and mutual understanding on the part of the musicians, from both East and West, in this sumptuous, beautifully recorded disc.

Ivan Moody

Instrumental



Jeremy Nicholas reviews Chopin's piano sonatas:

'Howard Shelley miraculously grades the sforzando/diminuendo marking as if he had a swell pedal' > REVIEW ON PAGE 68



Bryce Morrison reviews Claire-Marie Le Guay:

Here, in a magisterial contribution to this celebratory year, is a pianist born for Liszt's rhetorical grandeur' REVIEW ON PAGE 71

Barber

Ballade, Op 46. Excursions, Op 20. Nocturne, 'Homage to John Field', Op 33. Piano Sonata, Op 26. Souvenirs, Op 28. Two Interludes. Three Sketches – Love Song; To my Steinway; Minuet

Leon McCawley pf

Somm M SOMMCD0108 (69' • DDD)



Barber's solo piano music from British pianist Leon McCawley

It's a measure of the international standing of Barber that, a year after his centenary, a British pianist has come up with an outstanding release, and against plenty of competition. Pianists line up to play Barber's demanding Sonata, possibly because it was written for the legendary Horowitz, much as actors clamour to play Hamlet. McCawley takes the first movement slower than some pianists but he makes its points intelligently rather than resorting to a kind of non-stop pyrotechnical display. The Scherzo sparkles; the Adagio is impeccably paced through its anguished climax; and McCawley makes light of the difficulties of the final fugue as its catchy subject is put through its manic paces.

Souvenirs, with its light-hearted glances at various popular idioms, is a sheer delight, and so are the four Excursions dipping into jazz/blues/country in Barber's own way. Less well known are the Three Sketches written in Barber's teens and the Two Interludes – and only the first is included by McCawley's immediate competitor, Daniel Pollack (Naxos, 7/99). These stem from late Brahms but McCawley makes a convincing case for both of them.

Then there's the Nocturne (Homage to John Field) and the late Ballade, its opening common chords apparently expressing tranquillity but reflecting the isolation of Barber's sad final years in its dramatic central section.

McCawley delivers everything magnificently; he scores over the Pollack release with better piano sound; and there are booklet-notes from Pierre Brévignon, who started the Capricorn Society in France and whose Barber biography will appear this autumn. This is now the CD to get of Barber's piano music.

Peter Dickinson

Buxtehude

The Complete Organ Works, Vol 4'
Canzona, BuxWV173. Canzonettas - BuxWV167;
BuxWV225. Chorale Fantasias - Ich ruf zu dir, Herr
Jesu Christ, BuxWV196; Wie schön leuchtet der
Morgenstern, BuxWV223. Chorale Preludes - Christ
unser Herr zum Jordan kam, BuxWV180; Der Tag,
der ist so freudenreich, BuxWV182; Gott der Vater
wohn uns bei, BuxWV190; In dulci jubilo, BuxWV197
Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BuxWV211; Nun
lob, mein Seel, den Herren, BuxWV214. Fuga,
BuxWV176. Passacaglia, BuxWV161. Praeambulum,
BuxWV158. Praeludiums - BuxWV142; BuxWV148.
Toccatas - BuxWV156; BuxWV164

Christopher Herrick org

Hyperion © CDA67876 (71' • DDD)

Played on the organ of Trinity College Chapel,
Cambridge



Buxtehude's organ corpus, transcribed by his pupils

This is the fourth of a projected five-volume 'complete' series, using the most up-to-date editions of a corpus of music that survives only in copies by Buxtehude's pupils (including JS Bach) – that is, none of it being in the composer's own hand. As before, Herrick has programmed a highly satisfying sequence, mixing chorale-based pieces (five preludes and two fantasias) with more complex 'phantasticus', free-form, multi-sectional structures.

An unforced manner is essential for this opaque and, at times, fragile music. Two examples where this approach bears wondrous fruit are the prelude on *Gott der Vater*, with its delicate *pizzicato* pedal notes, and the limpid beauty of *Nun komm*, *der Heiden Heiland*. In the more robust fugal passages (with stuttering repeated-note subjects) it's refreshing to hear all the detail for a change.

Registrations are beautifully balanced throughout, and the *pleno*, while thrilling, isn't overbearing, possibly because Trinity College's 1975 Metzler doesn't have a 32ft reed. There is fizz and sparkle in all the right places and just enough warmth in the bass.

In comparison with that other recent complete 'Buxtehuder', Ton Koopman, Herrick has a freshness and elegance I prefer. He eschews the Dutchman's tendency to be over-fussy and even aggressive. This is shapely playing, with a touch of humour, especially in the sprightly jigs. A thoroughly enjoyable production, with the customary excellent documentation. Malcolm Riley

Chopin

Piano Sonatas – No 1, Op 4; No 2, Op 35; No 3, Op 58 Howard Shelley pf

Fryderyk Chopin Institute © NIFCCD022 (80' • DDD)



Familiar Chopin refreshed by Shelley on period instruments

Here is a rare chance to savour all of Chopin's piano sonatas played on contemporary instruments by his two preferred makers, Pleyel (1848) and Erard (1849). Helped by the shorter decay of the notes, textural details often obscured by modern instruments emerge, while utterly different tone colours from those we're used to throw fresh light on the music. I doubt if even pianophiles who would willingly wait a few years before listening yet again to such familiar scores will be anything less than fascinated by the results.

Even Howard Shelley, though, cannot rescue the first movement of the student Op 4 from seeming as interminable as usual, but perhaps it is hearing the remaining three, also in their period guise, that makes one regard them afresh with something close to affection. In the Second Sonata's first movement, played with the *doppio movimento* rather than *grave* repeat (surely the only sensible option), the left-hand quavers form a counterpoint rather than mere accompaniment; in bars 11 and 12 of the slow movement Shelley miraculously grades the sforzando/diminuendo marking as if he had a swell pedal. Such fine points draw the listener in: one waits with bated breath for the rest of the story. Shelley turns to the Pleyel for only the Scherzo and Presto movements.

The Third Sonata's first movement is given without a repeat but it is once again the slow movement, in my view, from which the music benefits most from the Erard's tonal palette. An amiable booklet completes this engrossing release from The Frederyk Chopin Institute, Warsaw. Jeremy Nicholas

Czerny

Piano Sonatas - No 3, Op 57; No 4, Op 65; No 10, Op 268. Rondino No 6, Op 42. Sonatine, Op 251. Gran Capriccio, Op 172. Andante & Allegro. Romance No 13, Op 755. Capriccio à la fuga, Op 89 Martin Jones of

Nimbus M 2 NI5872/3 (144' • DDD)



Widely neglected works by Czerny, played by Martin Jones

Pupil, friend and protégé of Beethoven and teacher of Liszt, Czerny composed more than a thousand compositions that have, sadly, been overshadowed by his pedagogical works (The School of Velocity, The Art of Finger Dexterity, etc). But, as this scintillating two-disc album (the third in Martin Jones's Czerny series) shows, such neglect is unmerited - moving on from the dazzling La ricordanza Variations (a Horowitz favourite) and the Variations brillantes (a Hough favourite) is music of often remarkable resource. The B flat Sonata brims with zest, cascades of double notes and one thorny virtuoso gesture after another. The bouncy Scherzo (aptly described in Calum MacDonald's notes as 'naughtily capering') is a special delight.

The Third Sonata, however, has more than a touch of quasi-orchestral grandeur, and if its march rhythms remind you of both Schumann and Alkan, the gnomic progression of its *Andante* foreshadows something later turned to mordant advantage by Prokofiev in the *Andantino* from his Fifth Piano Sonata. The *Capriccio à la fuga* is a witty take on Bach, and all this ultra-demanding music is played by Martin Jones with seemingly effortless mastery and a special musical commitment. Enterprise and accomplishment could scarcely go further, and every ear-tickling note is captured in Nimbus's superbly bold and exciting sound. **Bryce Morrison**

Elgar

Pomp and Circumstance Marches (arr Farrington) -No 3; No 5. 'Enigma' Variations - Nimrod (arr Harris). Organ Sonata No 1. Sospiri (arr Quinney). Severn Suite (arr Farrington). The Spirit of England -Solemn Prelude: For the Fallen (arr Grace)

Robert Quinney org

Signum © SIGCD266 (75' • DDD)

Played on the organ of Westminster Abbey



Elgar favourites on the organ and nearly all transcriptions

If overwhelming organ sound – especially from the Tuba stops – is what you're after, this is for you. Signum Classics' recording is tremendously vivid across the whole spectrum and captures the Westminster Abbey atmosphere in all its blazing majesty. Don't start worrying about the neighbours; they'll just have to put up with it. If it's

a masterly display of an organist revelling in transcriptions that push the pseudo-orchestral effects of a grand organ to the limits, then you can relish this, too. From the opening of the third *Pomp and Circumstance* with its realistic woodwind barking effects to the shimmering strings of *Sospiri* and the devastating *crescendo* in 'Nimrod', the effect is always absolutely scintillating and wholly believable.

If, however, you want a sympathetic guide to Elgar's organ music, this definitely is not for you. We get only one genuine organ work – the G major Sonata – and, instead of Ivor Atkins's Elgar-approved B flat Sonata, Robert Quinney unearths a feeble transcription of the Severn Suite, a work whose chequered history reflects its uneven musical inspiration.

Quinney does not emerge as a sympathetic Elgarian – his booklet-notes make that plain – and while his playing is magnificently flamboyant, it is focused more on the organ than on Elgar. The Sonata is tossed off with little feel for idiom, while any musical worth in the other pieces tends to be subjugated by an all-embracing desire for vivid aural effect.

For a genuine compendium of Elgar organ music played with utter integrity by someone wholly in sympathy with the idiom, you must turn to John Butt's disc. Marc Rochester

Sonata – selected comparison: Butt (4/02) (HARM) HMU90 7281

Forgueray

Suites I-V

Ketil Haugsand hpd

Simax (F) (2) PSC1317 (129' • DDD)

Forqueray

Suites I-V

Michael Borgstede hpd

Brilliant Classics © 2 94108 (151' • DDD)





Two instructively varying approaches to Forgueray's harpsichord suites

That Jean-Baptiste Forqueray is credited with making harpsichord transcriptions of his father Antoine's five gamba suites seems remarkable considering how terribly the father treated the son, having him imprisoned on a trumped-up debauchery charge and successfully banished from their kingdom for a short period. Then again, it is possible that father Antoine's gamba originals (or certain movements, at least) are Jean-Baptiste's own handiwork, while the son's harpsichordist wife may well have written the keyboard arrangements. In any event, the harpsichord versions take full advantage of the instrument's two-manual layout and potential for contrapuntal agility and decorative

panache, despite the music's tendency to sit in the lower register.

The present pair of Forqueray cycles by Ketil Haugsand and Michael Borgstede will surely interest collectors familiar with previous editions from Christophe Rousset, Luc Beausejour and Jacques Ogg, as well as a splendid yet hard-to-locate version by Yannick Le Gaillard. Borgstede uses a double-manual French harpsichord modelled after Pascal Taskin (1723-93). Its tuning is in accord with Rameau's 'Tempérament ordinaire', which seems to befit the instrument's full-bodied yet mellow resonance. By contrast, a leaner, more dulcet and transparent timbre characterises the double-manual late-Flemish instrument that Haugsand himself built in 1971.

In the main, Haugsand is a detail-oriented interpreter, who employs more detached articulation along with a wide variety of agogic rhythmic stresses and accents. Borgstede's phrasing is more generalised and *legato*-based, and he takes more time to arpeggiate chords in slower movements. This accounts for Borgstede's longer timings, apart from the fact that he takes every repeat, whereas Haugsand wisely avoids those that prolong certain movements beyond their natural momentum, such as the brilliant *tour de force* 'Jupiter' that concludes the Fifth Suite.

Other examples further illuminate interpretative differences. For instance, in the Fourth Suite's 'La Clément' movement, Borgstede's overlapping legato technique draws out the music's lyricism and harmonic tension, in contrast to Haugsand's more incisive and aggressive vantage point. In the sarabandes, Borgstede tends to project the principal melodies and accompanying flourishes at the same textural level, while Haugsand's brisker tempi and quicker chordal arpeggiations allow the melodies to register more clearly. And as Haugsand lavishes purposeful embellishments on the Fifth Suite's 'Le Rameau', Borgstede conveys a stronger, steadier pulse. The Third Suite's elaborate concluding Chaconne comes vividly to life in Haugsand's hands, where his use of agogics generates an infectious rhythmic snap that wouldn't be out of place in Soler or Scarlatti. Here Borgstede's fingerwork is more straightforward and virtuoso, although his tendency to ritard at the ends of sections grows increasingly predictable. However, there's little to choose between both artists for their hypnotic delicacy in 'La Regente'.

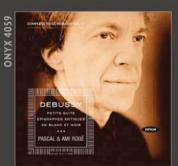
As one might gather by now, it isn't easy to make a clear-cut choice between Borgstede and Haugsand. The former is less expensive but the latter boasts closer, more translucent sound. Futhermore, there's Jacques Ogg's superior virtuoso panache and characterful verve to consider, while I hope that



Outstanding new releases on ONYX from James Ehnes, Christianne Stotijn, Pieter Wispelwey, Florian Boesch, Shai Wosner, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Kirill Karabits, Chen Reiss, Ilya Gringolts, The Nash Ensemble and the start of an exciting Beethoven Sonata cycle from Jonathan Biss.



Chen Reiss · L'arte del mondo · Werner Ehrhardt Arias by Mozart, Haydn, Salieri, Cimarosa



Pascal & Ami Rogé Debussy · Piano Music Vol. 5



Shai Wosner
Schubert · Piano Sonatas D840 & D850,
Six German Dances D820



Boesch · Martineau Schubert · Winterreise



Jonathan Biss Beethoven · Sonatas Vol. 1 Opp. 10/1, 22, 26 & 81a 'Les Adieux'



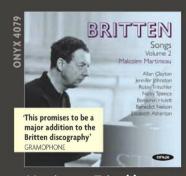
Wispelwey · Giacometti Chopin & Mendelssohn · Cello Sonatas



The Nash Ensemble Borodin Sextet, Glazunov Quintet, Arensky Quartet No.2



Kirill Karabits · BSO
Tchaikovsky Symphony No.2, Mussorgsky
Night on the Bare Mountain (orig. version),
Pictures at an Exhibition



Martineau · Tritschler Spence · Atherton etc Britten · Songs Vol. 2 including three world premiers



Gringolts Quartet Schumann String Quartets 1-3, Piano Quintet (2CD)



Christianne Stotijn with Joseph Breinl Lieder by Pfitzner, Strauss, Mahler



James Ehnes · Vladimir Ashkenazy · Sydney Symphony Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto etc

"The must-have boutique label" Independent on Sunday

Visit www.onyxclassics.com for information on Onyx releases and artists, plus downloads www.onyxclassics.com

Le Gaillard's cultivated finesse will not linger in obscurity much longer. Still, both of these releases are viable options that will satisfy anyone seeking out harpsichord versions of the Forqueray suites.

Jed Distler

Selected comparisons:

Beausejour (1/96) (NAXO) 8 553407, 8 553717

Ogg (2/96) (GLOB) GLO6027

Rousset (2/02) (DECC) 466 976-2OH2

Le Gaillard (MAND) MAN4818/19

Ives

Violin Sonatas - Nos 1-4 **Hilary Hahn** vn **Valentina Lisitsa** pf

DG

O

477 9435GH (65' • DDD)



New recordings by Hahn of her countryman's violin sonatas

When a star such as Hilary Hahn takes on the Ives violin-and-piano sonatas it has to be special. These four works came at the peak of Ives's composing career, in the years around the First World War. He had reservations about the Third Sonata because he felt he'd weakened after a professional violinist criticised his dissonant, unplayable music. The Fourth is a curiosity because Ives quotes some of his father's own music in the first movement, and it took Ives back to his own childhood.

Recordings of these sonatas started with 78s but the most authoritative, after some years of playing them from memory, was an LP with Daniel Stepner and that great Ivesian John Kirkpatrick on Musical Heritage in 1982. There have been several since. Today the competition for Hahn comes from Curt Thompson and Rodney Waters (Naxos, 9/04). Thompson did a doctorate on these pieces so knows his Ives, and the performances are thoroughly idiomatic, sometimes wayward, but with magical, transcendental soft passages.

In comparison, Hahn may have less tonal variety but she and Lisitsa, accurately balanced, are completely efficient in every way. They understand the Ives idiom, saturated with hymn-tunes; they swing with the best of them; and their performances are as convincing as anything on offer.

Peter Dickinson

Liszt

Piano Concertos - No 1^a; No 2^b. Fantasy on Hungarian Folk-tunes, S123, Op 458^c. Totentanz, S126 for piano & orchestra^d

György Cziffra pf

^aOrchestra Sinfonica di Torino della RAI / Fulvio Vernizzi; ^{bc}Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano della RAI / Bernhard Conz; ^dOrchestra del Teatro la Fenice di Venezia / Umberto Cattini

Recorded live, ^aMarch 18, 1958, ^{bc}March 6, 1959, ^dMarch 6, 1960

Dynamic M IDI6616 (70' • ADD)



Reissue of a pianist who took the world by storm in the '50s

'Greater than Horowitz, he combines the precision of a metronome with the electrical discharge of a thunderstorm.' Such was the initial response to György Cziffra (1921-94) and his meteoric arrival on the European concert scene during the '50s. I well remember a Festival Hall recital where, as a seemingly phantom presence – his head and shoulder caught in a spotlight (all other illumination extinguished, in open defiance of fire regulations) – he drove his capacity audience into a state of frenzy. His Chopin may have suited his alternating ultra-virtuosity and languor less easily than his Liszt, and it was chiefly in Liszt that he made his reputation.

But musical fashions change quickly and cruelly, and Cziffra's hallmark rapid *crescendos* and *decrescendos* within the bar (almost as if a grenade had been tossed into the piano), combined with increasing idiosyncrasy and distortion, lost their appeal as his audiences turned to more classic styles. Within a short period, prompted by disillusionment and personal tragedy, Cziffra retired into seclusion.

Dynamic's disc includes Liszt's four major works for piano and orchestra taken from live Italian broadcasts dating from 1958-60, and even when the sound is dim and dated it hardly erases a unique charisma. Here, and particualrly in the *Hungarian Fantasy*, nothing is set in stone; everything sounds improvised, gypsystyle, on the spot. And if such playing was derided it was largely by those who envied a command beyond their wildest dreams. Could it be that Cziffra was the closest to Liszt's own style, a pianist of transcendental brilliance and a daring virtually unknown today? **Bryce Morrison**

Liszt

Apres une lecture de Dante, S161 No 7. Piano Sonata, S178. Ballade, S171 Claire-Marie Le Guay pf Accord © 476 4244 (69' • DDD)



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The latest Liszt from French pianist Claire-Marie Le Guay

Here, in a magisterial contribution to this celebratory year, is a pianist born for Liszt's rhetorical grandeur. All these performances, exhausting and elating in their strength and mastery, are on a scale far beyond the offerings of other more obviously celebrated pianists. With the 12 *Transcendental Etudes* already behind her on disc, Claire-Marie Le Guay now takes three of Liszt's masterpieces by storm, riveting your attention in every bar of the *Dante* Sonata, whether in her dazzling final pages or in a no less vivid response to the *improvisato* and *dolcissimo con amore* sections.

In the B minor Sonata her rubato is heavy and intense in a style that returns you to the great days of Claudio Arrau. She makes it clear that this is a towering landmark in the history of music and her entire performance is a far cry from Marguerite Long's definition of the French school of piano-playing: one that is 'ludic, precise, slender...concentrating on grace rather than force'. Again, Le Guay's way with the Second Ballade is of an unfaltering authority (though with an unusual choice of ossia in the final build-up). Here, as Sacheverell Sitwell so eloquently told us, is music 'concerned less with personal suffering than with great happenings on the epical scale'. The sound is of demonstration quality and I can't wait to hear this formidable and compulsive artist again. Bryce Morrison

Mahler · Feldman

Mahler Symphony No 9 - 1st movt (arr A Breier) **Feldman** Piano

Albert Breier pf

Edition Laura (F) 004 (52' • DDD)



Breier brings Mahler's Ninth Symphony to the piano

Edition Laura's clumsy booklet-note may gorge on hard-sell schlock – 'the tension [in Mahler's Ninth Symphony] between the single creative individual and the brutal antagonistic forces of the "world" is even more poignantly expressed in Albert Breier's version for solo piano' – but Albert Breier has actually prepared a meticulous and discerning transcription of the opening *Andante comodo*.

It's everything that Christopher White's flabby, muddled, badly recorded version of his and Ronald Stevenson's transcription of Mahler's Tenth Symphony (Divine Art) is not. Breier's less-is-more strategy pulls you into the immediate. Harmonic sequences are plotted moment-to-moment and cogent choices are made about what needs editing out to allow the music to speak appropriately on the piano: the musical concentrate without its orchestral front; a harmonic pictogram sketched from the inside. Mahler's structure can still breathe and evolve over time – unlike White's fix-its and make-do's.

There are, of course, compromises: high-register 'string' lines no longer strain against themselves, and not much can be done to re-enact the spatial ping-pong of motifs between timpani and double basses that herald the final push. But, during this last section, the brinkmanship of Mahler's volatile harmony is traced over its naked essence: a compelling reason to hear this performance.

The pairing might seem incongruous until you think about Morton Feldman's desire to be 'the first great composer that is Jewish' and, more pointedly, that pages in Mahler's Ninth begin to resemble Feldman's sparse, white-canvas notation. This *Piano* (1977) refuses to conform to the party line of acknowledged Feldmanistas like John Tilbury and Aki Takahashi. Breier doesn't linger over those expected resonant spaces that, anyway, his dry attack precludes. What isn't precluded is intelligent dynamic and tonal contouring, and intelligent ventriloquising of Feldman's labyrinth. **Philip Clark**

Liszt · Mussorgsky

Liszt Un sospiro, S144 No 3. Rigoletto Paraphrase, S434 **Mussorgsky** Pictures at an Exhibition **Nobuyuki Tsujii** pf

Challenge Classics (F) CC72526 (44' • DDD)



The 2009 Van Cliburn winner views Mussorgsky's Pictures

Given Nobuyuki Tsujii's standing as the 2009 International Van Cliburn Competition gold medalist, you'd expect him to deliver a powerful, individually compelling recording of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* rather than this tame non-event. His well-judged tempi are assiduously integrated, yet the musical miscalculations abound.

While he straightforwardly dispatches the Promenades and 'Il vecchio castello', they are blandly characterised and squarely phrased. The playful infants in the 'Tuileries' are affected by fussy accentuations, contrived speed-ups and poorly judged transitions between sections. Why impose Chopinesque diminuendos in 'Bydlo' when Mussorgsky doesn't ask for them? After all, there's no need to prettify the composer's stern evocation of a dragging oxcart. Tsujii's smoothed-out, softgrained way with 'Samuel Goldenberg und Schmuyle' flattens out the overt thematic contrasts. Constricted dynamics and casually observed accents also reduce the busy marketplace bustle of 'Limoges' to the dimensions of a salon étude. Moreover, its coda is supposed to slam directly into the 'Catacombae' movement's initial loud chord but Tsujii ruins this shattering dramatic gesture by inserting a tiny breath pause. The tremolos in 'Cum mortuis in lingua mortua' are pleasant rather than spooky, while the climatic 'Baba Yaga' and 'Great Gate at Kiev' movements lack dynamic contrast and dramatic momentum.

In Liszt's *Rigoletto Paraphrase*, Tsujii speeds through *recitativo* passages as if he had no clue of their vocal origin, even though he admirably shapes long-lined melodies within thickets of decorative filigree. The small-scale yet suavely dispatched 'Un sospiro' is hardly the most impassioned rendition available, yet it's easy on the ear. Tsujii's workaday artistry and incongruous programme choices clock in at a stingy 44 minutes which, by compact disc standards, adds up to a non-starter. **Jed Distler**

Schumann

'The Complete Works for Piano, Vol 5'
Carnaval, Op 9. Impromptus, Op 5. Albumblätter,
Op 124. Novelletten, Op 21. Gesänge der Frühe,
Op 133. Sieben Clavierstücke in Feghettenform,
Op 126. Variations on a Theme of Schubert
Cédric Pescia pf

Claves (F) (2) 50 1103/4 (153' • DDD)



Cédric Pescia continues his exploration of Schumann

The Swiss-French pianist Cédric Pescia adds two further discs to his previous volume in Claves's series of Schumann's complete piano works. And in Vol 5 he admirably blends the familiar and unfamiliar. Yet, if his energy and enthusiasm are almost palpable, there is too little sense of counterbalancing poise, of calm as well as disquiet. True, he rightly makes Pater's definition of Romanticism - 'the addition of strangeness to beauty' - central to his view, and in the wilder moments of the Novelletten you are made especially aware of a composer on the edge, ready in his own words 'to sing myself to death'. Carnaval is, however, a disappointment: the start is rushed rather than maestoso, there's a lack of rhythmic delicacy in 'Reconnaissance', 'Aveu' is more skittish than affectionate, and there's a want of charm in the 'Valse allemande'. Regrettable, too, is an unseemly rush to the finishing post, and, overall, Pescia hardly ranks among the most elegant dancers in Schumann's kaleidoscopically shifting ballroom scene.

He is more successful in the early Impromptus, in the Albumblätter (although Schumann's inspiration had started to fail at this point) and in the strange Gesänge der Frühe, morning songs that caused the evercautious Clara to throw up her hands in despair. Op 126 is alive with fleeting memories of Schumann's beloved Bach but the Variations on a Theme of Schubert suggest brevity merely as brevity rather than the soul of wit. Chris Walton's accompanying essay makes a vigorous, even cynical assault on the romantic legend of Robert and Clara (he equates them to Humbert and Lolita) and he refers to Carnaval as 'a Viennese schnitzel laced with magic mushrooms'.

Both discs are well recorded and presented, even though they feature five pictures of the pianist and none of the composer. Further issues from Finghin Collins, who launched this series in fine and exuberant style, would be more than welcome.

Bryce Morrison

'British!'

Crane Chorale for Howard Skempton. Birthday Piece for Michael Finnissy Emsley for piano - 1; 12. Finnissys Fifty Finnissy Tango to Celebrate Howard Skempton's Fiftieth Birthday. Sonata for (Toy) Piano. Tango for Laurence Crane **Skempton** Notti stellate a vagli. Starlight. after-image. Eirenicon 4. Even Tenor

Steffen Schleiermacher pf

Dabringhaus und Grimm (F) MDG613 1634-2 (65' • DDD)



A Continental eye is trained on British piano music

Steffen Schleiermacher tells us that his knowledge of British culture derives in its entirety from TV crime dramas of the Midsomer Murders/Inspector Lynley variety, which presumably explains why these are the stupidest booklet-notes I've ever read. 'The British?' he asks. 'Are they the people who after a day at the bookmakers, do not retire to their homes but to the nearest pub? Once there, they gorge on salt and vinegar crisps and during a game of darts, get drunk on many a pint?' Cricket, village greens, tea, weather, gardening - Schleiermacher's insights into our 21st-century national psyche, each badly translated, continues apace. Now call me John Bull, but when it comes to dredging up such stereotypes, Germans are on uniquely shaky ground, unless there's something about their famous sense of humour I've missed. When he asserts, though, that British music remains aloof from developments in central European composition, Schleiermacher is on sturdier terrain, and only an outsider could - rubbish booklet-notes forgiven and brilliant playing to the fore - tell us so much about our musical DNA.

Let's further that 'crisp' analogy. Schleiermacher focuses on four composers who have stood determinedly outside the ready-salted mainstream. They're all pals: Finnissy's *Tango* is dedicated to Skempton, who dedicates four miniatures to Finnissy; Laurence Crane's *Chorale* is for Howard Skempton; a second Finnissy *Tango* is dedicated to Crane, who writes a *Birthday Piece* for Michael Finnissy. Only Richard Emsley has nothing dedicated to him.

So, poetic justice aplenty as it emerges that Emsley is the aesthetic pivot around which 'British!' swings. Because the real monkeypuzzle here has nothing to do with potato snacks, or Midsomer Murders in a post-John Nettles era, but why non-mainstream British music deals up zillions of notes or hardly any at all; how come Finnissy's 'complexity' and Skempton's 'simplicity' have more in common than either man has with, say, Oliver Knussen. Emsley jolts form out of alignment with content. Surface busy-ness is placed in tension with forms that evolve only gradually. That's scale not form, to quote Morton Feldman, whose Triadic Memories Skempton mined for the tightly meandering structure of

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Notti stellate a vagli, with its recurring, crinkle-cut melodic fragments.

What it is to be a 'British' composer following not the usual narratives but using Feldman, Cage, Satie, Ives et al to rethink basic notational principles. Perhaps a more appropriate title might have been 'British?'. Philip Clark

'Delicias'

'Spanish Delights for Piano Duo'

Chabrier España^a Granados Quejas ó la maja y el ruiseñor (arr Bartlett/Robertson)^a Lecuona
Malagueña (arr Nash)^a Rodrigo Concierto de
Aranjuez - Adagio^a Chaminade La Sévillane, Op 19^a
Falla Noches en los jardines de España
(arr Bertram)^a Saint-Saëns La jota aragonese,
Op 64^a Rimsky-Korsakov Capriccio espagnol,
Op 34^b Tárrega Gran vals (arr Goldstone)^b
Anthony Goldstone, Caroline Clemmow ^apfs/^bpf
Divine Art (® DDA25101 (75' • DDD)



Latest in a series of duo-piano transcriptions of Spanish works

Delicias', the title for Anthony Goldstone and Caroline Clemmow's 'Spanish delights for piano duo', is the 15th issue in their endlessly enterprising series for Divine Art. And here, whether in authentic Spain or clever pastiche, they make you wonder why the Spanish repertoire and its offshoots aren't more eagerly embraced by virtually every musician. True, its personal and volatile idiom remains alien to several great pianists ('I'm a Russian, not a Spanish gypsy' – Horowitz), but at its greatest, as in Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, it remains a haunting evocation, the very essence of a once exotic land.

Goldstone and Clemmow launch their recital with Chabrier's España, a riotous tribute to the composer's lifelong love of Spain and its women, who entranced him with their 'sparkling smiles and that marvellous Sevillian behind that goes on turning and turning while the rest of the body seems not to move at all'. They're also at their brilliant best in Rimsky-Korsakov's Capriccio espagnol, in Saint-Saëns's elegant take on the Spanish idiom and in their Tárrega finale, where they send you gently waltzing across the ballroom floor, for Goldstone, writing in his informative notes, 'a whimsical encore'. Elsewhere in Granados, Lecuona, Rodrigo and Falla I could have wished for a higher degree of engagement. The Falla in particular cries out for a finer memory of its orchestral colour, its magic weighed down by this none the less fascinating arrangement. But all these performances are never less than richly experienced and musicianly, and Divine Art's sound is admirably clear, leaving you to wonder what this admirable duo still have up their sleeves and in their fingers. Bryce Morrison

'Paganini's Daemon'

'Paganini's Daemon: A Most Enduring Legend' Gidon Kremer vn John Williams gtr Svizzera Italiana Chorus and Orchestra / Lawrence Foster A film by Christopher Nupen

Allegro Films € A12CND (79' • NTSC • 16:9 • stereo • 0 • s)



An illustrated lecture on the career, with musical examples

The meaning of the title escapes me; the booklet contends that '[Paganini] served his daemon with commitment and dedication'. Both imply that Paganini was in the grip of some supernatural spirit halfway between God and man. Why perpetuate the paranormal myth with such an ascription? Paganini was complex and supremely gifted musically. A genius. Can't we leave it at that?

This 1995 film is really a radio talk illustrated with an impressive selection of pictures. Christopher Nupen provides in his usual trademark literate, elegant script a straightforward chronological account of Paganini's career. Its very wordiness, though, means that you feel the musical examples come almost as an unwelcome interruption to the narration. This is spoken by Nupen himself with an idiosyncratic and unvarying inflection in which the voice maintains the same note before dropping a perfect fifth to the tonic at the end of every sentence.

Nupen is also the voice of Paganini, reading extracts from his letters without any discernible change in tone or inflection. This doesn't help the feeling that we're attending a lecture. It's the sort of problem that arises when writer, producer, director and narrator are one and the same. A second or third pair of eyes can be beneficial. They might have asked why the contributions of the four professional actors, who read the quotes from Liszt, Goethe, Heine et al, are recorded in an empty concert hall, or have suggested adding on-screen identification of the music excerpts. With the exception of the Violin Concerto No 1, the 'La campanella' movement of No 2 and Caprice No 24, these are confined to the little-known Paganini no Moto perpetuo, Moses Fantasy, Le streghe, I palpiti or Non più mesta - nor are his seminal technical innovations as clearly illustrated as they might be.

What we do have is superbly played by Gidon Kremer, the invisible Orchestra and Chorus della Svizzera Italiana and conductor Lawrence Foster, and with John Williams, no less, on hand for the guitar/violin pieces. Shot in extreme close-up, only Williams's hands are ever seen, and Kremer remains unidentified until the very last selection. At least he wasn't made to wear a long black wig and sideburns.

Verdict: good, worth a view, but not one of Nupen's best. **Jeremy Nicholas**

'Travels with my Lute'

Abel Arpeggio JS Bach Partita, BWV1006 Preludium; Gavotte en Rondeau Brade Des
Rotschencken Tantz Burgmüller La chevaleresque
Cabezón Diferencias Debussy La fille aux cheveux
de lin Dowland What if a day. Earl of Essex, his
Galliard. Fantasia Kapsberger Toccata VI.
Gagliarda III Milan Fantasia. Pavan Milano Two
Ricercari Molinaro Fantasias - I; XV Mudarra
Fantasia Narváez Mille regrez. Un baxa de
contrapuncto Sanz/Murzia Marizapalos Spinacino
Recercare Weiss Passacaille Traditional Såsom
stjärnan uppå Himmelen. Springlåt från Lima
(both arr Berger)

Ryosuke Sakamoto /te
Musica Rediviva ® MRCD013 (63' • DDD)



An eclectic mix of lute music spanning five centuries

Recorded in Sweden in 2005, this recital by the Japanese-born lutenist Ryosuke Sakamoto of 25 items ranges wide over the lute repertory from the 16th to the 20th centuries, drawing on pieces from Spain, Italy, England and Germany. The six from Spain which open the programme date from the early 16th century and feature such composers as Luis Milan, Mudarra and Narváez. But it is the four Italian pieces that begin to demonstrate the instrument's full potential, with a lively *Recercare* by Francesco Spinacino.

Yet more striking still are the three pieces by John Dowland, representing England, that follow: a haunting piece in a minor key, *What if a Day*, the *Earl of Essex*, *his Galliard* and a wonderful Fantasia. Like Dowland, William Brade spent part of his career at the Danish court and Sakamoto explains that he prefers to play the Dance, here included, slowly as though it were a pavane.

Next, the 17th-century section with a Toccata and Galliard by JH Kapsberger, leading to two pieces by JS Bach, notably the unforgettable Gavotte en Rondeau which he arranged from his E major Partita for solo violin. A fine Passacaglia by Silvius Weiss and a virtuoso piece called *Arpeggio* in compound time by Carl Abel round off the section.

The two 19th- and 20th-century pieces are arrangements of piano pieces: La chevaleresque by Norbert Burgmüller, a short-lived contemporary of Mendelssohn, and – best-known of all – 'La fille aux cheveux de lin' from the first book of Debussy's Préludes. Finally come two Swedish folk-tune arrangements, the second being especially lively and attractive. Then, as Sakamoto explains in his informative note, he likes to round off his recitals, as here, with a final Spanish piece, Marizápalos in versions by Gaspar Sanz and Santiago de Murzia. Sakamoto's virtuosity is a constant delight, and he is helped by vivid, close-up sound. Edward Greenfield

Vocal



Richard Wigmore reviews Miah Persson's Schumann

'She touchingly conveys a journey from shy, dazed innocence through joy in motherhood to the shock of bereavement' ► REVIEW ON PAGE 81



Fabrice Fitch reviews Victoria from Ensemble Plus Ultra

'At last there comes a project worthy in scope of one of the best-loved composers of the Renaissance' > REVIEW ON PAGE 83

JS Bach

Mass in B minor, BWV232

Bethany Seymour sop Sally Bruce-Payne mez Jason Darnell, Joshua Ellicott tens Peter Harvey bass Yorkshire Bach Choir; Yorkshire Baroque Soloists / Peter Seymour

Signum (M) (2) SIGCD265 (103' • DDD • T/t)



Seymour follows his Passion with a Mass in B minor

Peter Seymour's recent *St John Passion* (1/11) got to the heart of the drama with an unequivocal reading, and this is a B minor Mass of similarly rapt engagement. Adopting the most common force-size and type among prevalent orthodoxies – notably a chamber choir and 'period' band – the Yorkshire Bach Choir and Baroque Soloists again respond alertly and open-heartedly in the full ensemble, which is where the greatest rewards are reaped.

Directness affords the soaring choruses of the Gloria a rare luminosity, and to those of the Credo added ingredients of space and elegance, among the bustle of contrapuntal sparring. Much of the momentum is also achieved by judicious decisions on spaces between movements. If some of the speeds surprise in their questing fervour (the 'Christe eleison' takes alla breve to the limits), compensation arrives by way of Seymour's encouragement to follow the meaning of each line with unstudied conviction, most beautifully realised in the irradiating mysteries of the 'Et incarnatus' and 'Crucifixus'. With the majority of the virtuoso choruses, the tempi are unhurried, Seymour choosing a pragmatic path between musical ambition and technical possibility. Only a slightly push-me-pull-you 'Cum Sancto Spiritu' highlights any notable limitations.

Akin to the *St John*, the solo work is considerably less compelling than the large-scale ensemble movements. Peter Harvey's customarily fine singing of the 'Quoniam' and 'Et in spiritum' are state-of-the-art and an affecting 'Agnus Dei' from Sally Bruce-Payne is not far behind. Elsewhere there is too much vocal instability to rival the plethora of versions where the *tutti* work is similarly fine.

On one particular point, I wondered whether Bach's poised and immaculate coloratura in the 'Laudamus te' really requires further embellishment. This is a small gripe but contributes to the view that corporate spirit and character are, on balance, not quite enough to carry the day.

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

Bach · Handel · Purcell

Bach Bist du bei mir, BWV508 Handel Ariodante -Qui d'amor; Con l'ali di costanza; Scherza infida; Dopo notte. Theodora - Angels, ever bright and fair; With darkness deep; Oh! that I on wings could rise; To thee, thou glorious son of wortha. Messiah -Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; But who may abide; He was despised; I know that my Redeemer liveth. Clori, Tirsi e Fileno - Va col canto lusingando: Barbaro! Tu non credi. Susanna - Bending to the throne of glory; Crystal streams in murmurs flowing; If guiltless blood be your intent; Guilt trembling spoke my doom. Radamisto - Qual nave smarrita. Ottone - Vieni, o figlio. Giulio Cesare -Svegliatevi nel core. Arianna - Qual leon Purcell Dido and Aeneas - Thy hand, Belinda; When I am laid in earth

Berlioz · Handel

Recorded 1989-95



Berlioz Les nuits d'été, Op 7ª Handel Agrippina -Ogni vento. Arianna in Creta - Mirami altero in volto. Giulio Cesare - L'angue offeso mai riposa; La giustizia. Ottone, Re di Germania - Vieni, o figlio, e mi consola. Radamisto - Ombra cara di mia sposa; Qual nave smarrita

Lorraine Hunt Lieberson mez

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra / Nicholas McGegan Philharmonia Baroque Productions ® PBPO1 (71' • DDD) Recorded 1991, ³1995





Portraits of a great artist in two Hunt Lieberson retrospectives Since Lorraine Hunt Lieberson's premature death in 2006 she has acquired an almost mythical aura, akin to that surrounding Kathleen Ferrier and Jacqueline Du Pré. Yet even without romanticising hindsight, these recordings reveal a singer whose combination of vocal beauty and passionate urgency of expression was unsurpassed in her generation. Her Irene in Glyndebourne's *Theodora* was the most searing single Handel performance I have ever heard.

During the early 1990s Hunt Lieberson's pure, evenly produced voice morphed from soprano to warm, full-bodied mezzo, sensuous without matronliness. Titled, simply, 'A Tribute', the Harmonia Mundi album draws from the many Handel recordings she made with Nicholas McGegan between 1989 and 1995. As a soprano, she sings the falsely accused Susanna's arias with grave tenderness, vividly suggesting the heroine's mingled pathos and spiritual strength in 'If guiltless blood'. Perhaps the jubilation in 'Rejoice greatly' is a touch hectic, for which McGegan - usually sympathetic, occasionally pernickety – must take some of the blame. But her Theodora (several years before she moved down to the role of Irene) is the most youthful and most vulnerable-sounding on disc: reverent without mawkishness in 'Angels, ever bright and fair', almost unbearably moving in the de profundis aria 'With darkness deep', death-longing etched into the very texture of her voice.

Ariodante was Hunt Lieberson's favourite Handel role. Her voice glints and darts in the exultant bravura arias, the coloratura always perfectly even, while in the lamenting 'Scherza infida' she veers between contemptuous accusation and numb desolation, then uses the embellishments in the *da capo* to create a sense of mounting panic. She brings the same mix of vocal purity, passion and emotional nakedness to a clutch of arias Handel wrote for Margherita Durastanti.

A different selection of arias for Durastanti appears on the Philharmonia Baroque Live disc. Hunt Lieberson's voice occasionally acquires an uncharacteristic edge here and the recording suffers from intermittent pre-echo. Yet her immediacy and intensity of response are as riveting as ever, whether in Sesto's triumphant 'La giustizia' or the hushed inwardness of Radamisto's 'Ombra cara'.

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For many, the prime attraction here will be Berlioz's cycle of love, disenchantment and loss, which Hunt Lieberson never recorded in the studio. Although she transposes several of the songs down a third, Hunt Lieberson rivals the famous recordings by Régine Crespin and Janet Baker. 'Villanelle' is as fresh and smiling as you could wish, while the burnished contralto depths of her voice come into their own in her mesmeric performance of 'Le spectre de la rose'. Under McGegan's discerning direction the transparent period sonorities make you marvel more than ever at the atmospheric delicacy of Berlioz's orchestration; and while never stinting on the impassioned climaxes, Hunt Lieberson shows an uncanny feel for the cycle's mysterious half-lights. In no other performance I know do singer and orchestra take such care over Berlioz's demands for pianissimo, ppp, even pppp. In sum, a cherishable memento of a great artist who always sang, as a colleague once said, 'as if every performance were her last'. Richard Wigmore

Les nuits d'été - selected comparisons: Baker (3/02) (BBCL) BBCL4077-2 Crespin (3/64^R) (DECC) 475 7712DOR

Balanescu/Milea

'The Island'

Songs by Alexander Balanescu and Ada Milea Ada Milea voc/atr Alexander Balanescu voc/vn Katie Wilkinson va Nicholas Holland vc Zlatko Kaucic perc Saphrane (F) S62610 (72' • DDD)



String pioneer Balanescu goes Robinson Crusoe

For quarter of a century now, Alexander Balanescu has been finding ways to synthesise facets of his Romanian heritage with those of contemporary music - for example, 'The Island' which takes in new and unexpected directions. The project came about when the violinist and composer encountered the work of guitarist and songwriter Ada Milea, engendering a mutual respect and an ongoing collaboration. As it currently stands, this project consists of 18 numbers ranging from a few seconds to several minutes in length, and taking as its basis the play of that name by surrealist writer Gellu Naum. Setting a Romanian subject - one that deals with minutiae from that country's post-war history - to an English text is merely one of the fascinating dichotomies here.

Although it uses the outline of the Robinson Crusoe story, 'The Island' quickly sets off on its own course in which the humorous, the bizarre and the fateful are brought into effective accord. Playing as well as singing, the main performers are joined by string trio and percussion in music whose 'alt-folk' qualities are manifest from the outset. Most of the individual items are dialogues of greater or lesser theatricality, though there are several whose appeal marks them out as pop songs pure if not so simple (for which sample 'Sheep Shelter' and 'Another Pirate Song'). Finely recorded and stylishly presented, the sequence makes an absorbing and affecting listen. If Balanescu and Milea have yet to perform it live, they should certainly consider doing so. Richard Whitehouse

Berlioz





Grande Messe des morts, Op 5 Robert Murray ten Gabrieli Consort & Players; Chetham's School of Music Symphonic Brass Ensemble: Wrocław Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra / Paul McCreesh

Signum (M) (2) SIGCD280 (89' • DDD • T/t) Recorded live at Mary Magdalene Church, Wrocław, September 2010



Berlioz's magnum opus live in Poland

'A vast and almost impossible project', Paul McCreesh calls it in a liner note. Berlioz's Grande Messe des morts is certainly not for the faint-hearted, either in terms of its enormous scale or its spectrum of powerful, visionary expression. But McCreesh has achieved something quite out of the ordinary in this performance of the Requiem that was commissioned from Berlioz in 1837 to mark the second anniversary of the death of a general killed in an assassination attempt on the French king Louis-Philippe.

The venue for the premiere was the appropriately imposing Les Invalides in Paris. For this recording McCreesh has gone to the acoustically ideal Gothic church of St Mary Magdalene in Wrocław, the Polish city in which he is now artistic director of the annual festival Wratislavia Cantans. He has amassed the necessary forces from his Gabrieli Players and Consort, the Wrocław Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir together with brass bands from Chetham's School of Music. The impact is overwhelming, not merely in the full-

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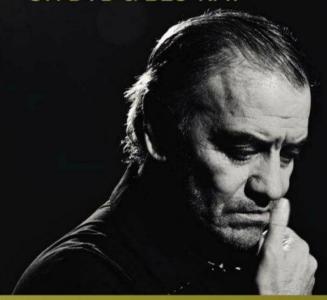


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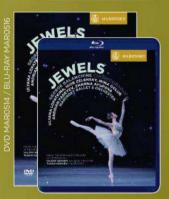


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GEORGE BALANCHINE'S

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throated eruptions of such episodes as the 'Dies irae' or the 'Rex tremendae'. The contrapuntal intricacy of Berlioz's choral writing is done with precision and firm accents, the haunted atmosphere of the 'Quid sum miser' interpreted with restrained, eloquently inflected choral singing and poignant instrumental interjections. The concept of Berlioz's Requiem Mass may embrace a certain element of grandiosity but, listening to this performance, it is impossible to forget that Berlioz was a supreme orchestrator and a composer with a broad dramatic talent. **Geoffrey Norris**

Fauré

Requiem, Op 48ª. Cantique de Jean Racine, Op 11b. Elégie, Op 24c. Pavane, Op 50b. Super flumina Babylonisd

^dMarie Virginia Savastano sop ^dLetitia Singleton contr ^aPhilippe Jaroussky counterten ^dMathias Vidal ten ^aMatthias Goerne bar ^dUgo Rabec bass ^cEric Picard vc

^{abd}Chorus of the Orchestre de Paris; Orchestra de Paris / Paavo Järvi

Virgin Classics (F) 070921-2 (63' • DDD • T/t)



Two male soloists for Fauré's delicate Requiem

This recording of the 1893 version of Fauré's Requiem is notable for the presence of Philippe Jaroussky. Traditionally sung by a boy's or a female voice, the real shock is just how well suited Jaroussky's countertenor turns out to be for the 'Pie Jesu'. There is astonishing purity even in the very highest register and a level of restrained drama that transforms this into something of quite extraordinary impact. There will be those who dislike it, but for my part Jaroussky elevates a performance which in every other respect is devoid of real character or insight.

Matthias Goerne has considerable but by no means overpowering presence – of the many baritones who have tackled this, he certainly is way up there with the best of them – and the Orchestre de Paris is nicely discreet. But Paavo Järvi has none of the Gallic intensity of Laurence Equilbey, nor does his choir have anything like the polish, the expressive range or the glorious richness of tone of Accentus. I have to say, too, the Naïve recording (in Paris's Ste-Clotilde) is in a class of its own.

The real interest in this new disc is a rare outing for Fauré's very first choral piece, *Super flumina Babylonis*. It is certainly no overlooked masterpiece but a remarkably serious and often quite operatic utterance from an 18-year-old student, showing more the influence of his teacher, Saint-Saëns, than clues to Fauré's own future development as a composer. However, the very best thing on the disc is the *Elégie*, where Eric Picard captures the essence of the lovely cello

solo while Järvi's skills in shaping and characterising an accompaniment shine through in some enchanting articulation from solo clarinet and oboe. Marc Rochester

Requiem, Cantique – selected comparison: Accentus, ONF, Equilbey (8/09) (NAIV) V5137

Hassler

Ecce sacerdos magnus. Cantate Domino. Missa Octava a 8. Ad Dominum cum tribularer. Laetentur coeli. Dixit Maria. Pater noster. Laudate Dominum. Verbum caro factum est

Octava Ensemble

Dux (F) DUX0750 (38' • DDD)



A Polish ensemble explores a German polymath

Hans Leo Hassler (£1564-1612) was something of a polymath: organist, polyglot, businessman, builder of mechanical instruments and one of the finest German-born composers of his day. His style is indebted to those of Palestrina and Lassus but has a genial quality about it that is instantly appealing.

The Octava Ensemble are a young Polish group comprising eight voices and perform Hassler's attractive Mass one-to-a-part. Thus they're able to claim (carts and horses notwithstanding) that they have a Mass named after them. With only eight singers, Hassler's Missa Octava poses undoubted challenges, which for the most part are successfully negotiated despite some rough edges. Thanks in part to the extrovert mood of Hassler's music, they sound bright and fresh. One senses, however, that an experienced producer might have helped them achieve even more - by advising them to adopt a faster tempo for the one truly solemn work on the disc, Ad Dominum cum tribularer, in order to shape its dissonances more dynamically (in particular the semitones at the beginning); and by catching the misreading that creeps into one of Hassler's best-known works, Dixit Maria ad angelum (at 0'47"). Several other blemishes might have been picked up but the overall impression is positive none the less. Enthusiasts of the high Renaissance will also have to overlook the surprisingly short programme on offer - yet another sign that this promising ensemble would benefit from a firmer hand at the tiller. Fabrice Fitch

Jolivet

'Complete Songs'

Jolivet Deux poésies de Francis Jammes^a. Chewing-gum^c. Faux rayon^a. Rondel 'Au retour de dure prison'^a. Le mule de Lord Bolingbroke^a. Prière des treize hommes dans la mine^c. Quatre mélodies sur des poésies anciennes^a. Le chant des regrets^c. Romantiques^a. Jeu du camp fou^a. Les trois

complaintes du soldat^b. Trois chansons de Ménestrel^a. Poèmes intimes^c. Trois poèmes galants^b. Jardins d'hiver^a **Varèse** Un grand sommeil noir^a

^aSophie Marilley mez ^bChristian Immler bar ^cRené Perler bar Filippo Farinelli pf Brilliant Classics § ③ (2 CDs + CD-ROM) 9220 (116' • DDD)



The French composer's songs in their entirety

What is one to make of a French song collection in which the third item out of 35, entitled 'Chewing-gum', is musically excruciating? That is due in part to the singer, Christian Immler, who uses very rough tone, possibly implying that the composer intended the song to be satirical.

The American association is clear from the hint of jazz rhythm, and the words offered on the accompanying CD-ROM sound like nonsense verse, though with no English translation to help that may not be the intention. At least it ties in with some of the other verses set, such as 'Jeu du camp fou' (roughly translated as 'Mad camp play'), which again suggests a satirical intention both in the music and the words.

André Jolivet (1905-74) was from the generation immediately following Les Six but his music shows few similarities. The present set, recorded in Perugia with the help of 'The Friends of André Jolivet', bears witness to the devotion of his admirers but his music is certainly an acquired taste. The oddity is that in most of the songs the piano accompaniment sounds as though the pianist is performing in mittens, so rough and ready is the writing. It makes matters worse that generally the accompaniments are rhythmically square, relating only distantly to the vocal lines above.

Happily, two of the three singers are very good. Most of the songs are sung by Sophie Marilley, who uses her bright mezzo-soprano most imaginatively, responding to the words with strong tonal contrasts. The baritone René Perler is good too, though he is given only a few songs. Unfortunately, Christian Immler sings consistently with his rough, unsupported tone.

The pianist, Filippo Farinelli, does what he can with Jolivet's idiosyncratic keyboard-writing but the recording hardly helps. Curiously, there is an extra item at the end, a song by Edgard Varèse, which tends to show up the limitations of Jolivet. Very much an issue for devotees. **Edward Greenfield**

Korngold

'Songs, Vol 1'

Drei Lieder, Op 18^a. Unvergänglichkeit, Op 27^a. Songs of the Clown, Op 29^a. Vier Lieder, Op 31^a.





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^aBritta Stallmeister sop ^bUwe Schenker-Primus bar Klaus Simon of

Naxos (\$\ 8 572027 (77' • DDD)



First instalment in a new survey of Korngold's songs

It's good to welcome the first issue in this new series of the complete songs of Korngold which, aside from Anne-Sofie von Otter's DG discs, have received scant attention. The earliest were composed in 1911 when Korngold was just 14 years old. The later ones to texts by Shakespeare were composed in Vienna in 1937 and rewritten by him from memory in 1941 after the Nazis burnt the originals.

The attractive young voices of soprano Britta Stallmeister and baritone Uwe Schenker-Primus fall easily on the ear and their interpretations offer many perceptive and poetic insights, as do the deft piano parts that are much more than mere adornments. The soaring soprano lines of the Op 22 set, and that of Op 27 on the theme of immortality, hold no qualms. The loveliest of them, 'Immortality II', with a haunting nostalgic tinge, is relished by singer and pianist. Korngold's English settings of Shakespeare's words seem to engage Stallmeister's heart and soul more than the German songs as she warms to the poignant 'Come away, Death', with its Mahlerian footsteps in the accompaniment, in contrast to the joyful 'O mistress mine', which has a delicious coda for the pianist. 'Desdemona's Song' shows off the clear top to the voice.

It's a real pleasure to hear the youthful baritone of Schenker-Primus in the Eichendorff settings, an astonishing achievement from the young Korngold. His singing is characterised by a smooth, even tone throughout the range and he interprets the changing moods in these adventuresome settings with great dexterity. The piano is recorded somewhat closer here than in the concert-hall balance for Stallmeister but that doesn't preclude a strong recommendation. Adrian Edwards

Lutosławski





Silesian Triptycha. Lacrimosaa. Paroles tisséesb. Sleep, sleepa. Les espaces du sommeilc. Chantefleurs et Chantefables^a

^aLucy Crowe sop ^bToby Spence ten ^cChristopher Purves bar BBC Symphony Orchestra / **Edward Gardner**

Chandos (F) CHAN10688 (68' • DDD • T/t)



Gardner's BBC Lutosławski project continues

Volume 2 in Edward Gardner's Lutosławski series for Chandos brings us six vocal compositions spanning more than five decades, the earliest of which is the hauntingly beautiful *Lacrimosa* for soprano and orchestra of 1937. Conceived as part of a never-completed Requiem, it might easily have come from a late work by Szymanowski. Lucy Crowe is in ravishing voice and displays comparable charm and composure in both the rustic Silesian Triptych (1951) and miniature 'Sleep, sleep' (the third of the four Children's Songs from 1954). She also shines in Chantefleurs et Chantefables, Lutosławski's penultimate opus, completed in 1990. These gem-like, at times distinctly Ravelian, settings of nine poems from Robert Desnos's eponymous collection for children, make an enchantingly varied and witty 20-minute sequence. And Crowe's immensely personable rendering must be deemed a worthy successor to distinguished versions by Dawn Upshaw, Valdine Anderson and Solveig Kringelborn.

Of course, Desnos's surrealist texts had previously fired Lutosławski's imagination in Les espaces du sommeil, an infinitely subtle and endlessly absorbing masterwork written for Fischer-Dieskau in 1975. Baritone Christopher Purves proves a wonderfully secure exponent in a reading which combines tingling atmosphere and arresting drama to consistently riveting effect. As for the sublimely delicate and exquisitely rapt Paroles tissées, tenor Toby Spence acquits himself with enormous credit in what is arguably Lutosławski's first fully mature canvas, originally fashioned for Peter Pears (who first performed it at the 1965 Aldeburgh Festival). In fact, all three vocal protagonists benefit from the most glowing and refined support imaginable from Gardner and the BBC SO, not to mention the Chandos production team. A terrific CD: roll on the next instalment!

Andrew Achenbach

Chantefleurs et Chantefables - selected comparisons: Upshaw, LAPO, Salonen (6/96) (SONY) SK67189 Anderson, BBC NOW, Otaka (8/96) (BIS) BIS-CD743 Kringelborn, Norwegian CO, Harding (5/98) (VIRG) 545275-2

MacMillan

Miserere. Strathclyde Motets - selection. O bone Jesu. Tenebrae Reponsories The Sixteen / Harry Christophers Coro (F) COR16096 (80' • DDD)



A new Miserere from MacMillan in the shape of the Allegri

Dedicated to Harry Christophers, who directed The Sixteen in the first performance at the Flanders Festival in August 2009, Miserere is the latest product of a close relationship that has grown up over the past decade between these performers and

James MacMillan. The Sixteen's uniquely warm and graceful sound certainly seems to have tapped a particularly timeless and atmospheric vein in MacMillan's creative persona and he has here presented them with something which tests not so much their collective virtuosity as their most profound musical instincts.

The huge popularity of Allegri's 1638 setting of the Miserere for the Sistine Chapel - which The Sixteen recorded very early on in their history - has tended to cast a shadow over subsequent settings of this text. It certainly has done so here; and while MacMillan's seems to inhabit a very different harmonic world in its opening stages, before long it, too, falls into the Allegri sequence of simple plainchant and interpolated episodes. No celestial high Cs here but something much more chorally unified and harmonically rich - and every bit as effective. The vocal lines, shrouded in a halo of incense-laden atmosphere, are delivered with wonderful fluidity, the sense of organic growth as the verses branch out from their plainchant roots beautifully conveyed, the choral tone warm and comforting and the overall sound profoundly beautiful.

Every bit as effective but requiring considerably more virtuosity, the extracts from MacMillan's earlier Strathclyde Motets and Tenebrae Responsories offer an opportunity to savour just what a superb choir The Sixteen are, and their especial affinity with this music heightens the impact of these powerful performances.

This disc bears testament to a rare and wonderful relationship between composer, choir and conductor. Long may it continue.

Marc Rochester

Pablo

Casi un espejo^a. Passio^b

bRoberto Balconi counterten bGeorg Nigl bar Men's voices of the Chorus of the Teatro Regio, Turin; RAI National Symphony Orchestra / a Juanjo Mena, ^bGianandrea Noseda

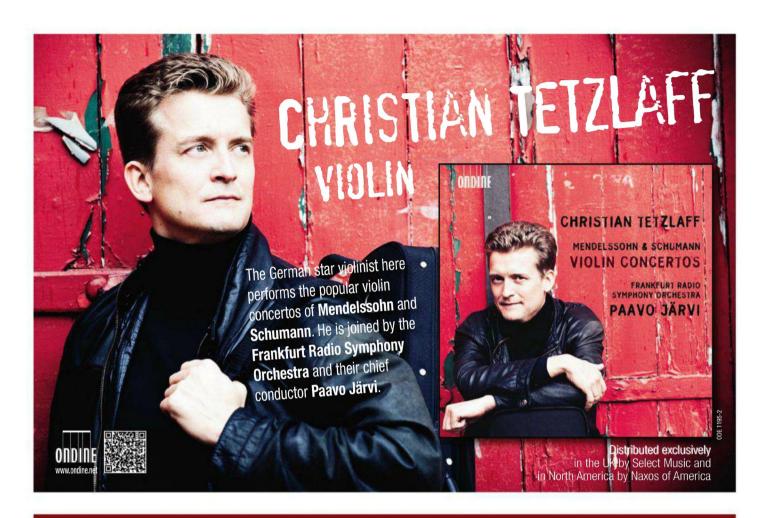
Turin, June 2005; bRAI Auditorium, Turin, April 2007

Anemos (F) C33008 (57' • DDD • T) Recorded live at the ^aAuditorium 'Giovanni Agnelli',

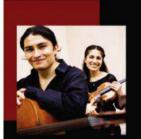


Noseda and Mena champion a Spanish modernist

Eighty last year, Luis de Pablo has amassed a substantial output which has won plaudits throughout Western Europe, though not so far in Britain. This release from the enterprising Anemos label features two substantial works finding this composer respectively at his most passionate and communicative. Along with Paul Celan, Primo Levi was the most significant writer to have witnessed and borne witness to the

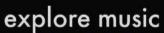


The Liszt School of Music Weimar



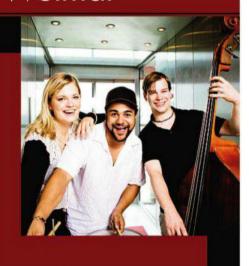
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promote music





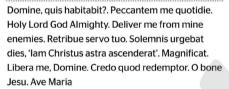
Holocaust: five of his poems comprise *Passio* (2006), whose four movements outline an almost symphonic integration of thought and emotion. The second movement's sombre interplay of male voices with an orchestra rich in percussive sonorities, then the third movement's agile dialogue between countertenor and solo strings, are more passive (though not less intense) than the imposing choral movements on either side – these latter being prefaced by an imaginative orchestral introduction that reminds one of Pablo's formidable expertise in this domain.

Such expertise is even more evident in Casi un espejo (2004) - a triptych whose title ('Almost a Mirror') refers to the balancing of its initial 'Ostinato', fugitive and ominous by turns, with the distanced though never hermetic transformation of its material in the final 'Penumbra'. Between them, the searching restraint of 'Retiró' makes a slow movement of notable eloquence. Performances are directed by Gianandrea Noseda and Juanjo Mena - the outgoing and incoming conductors of the BBC Philharmonic, whom it would be good to hear in this music. Annotations are excellent but an absence of translations for the Levi poems has to be considered a drawback.

Richard Whitehouse

Parsons





The Cardinall's Musick / Andrew Carwood Hyperion © CDA67874 (70' • DDD • T/t)



Carwood and his singers make the case for Parsons

Spare a thought for poor Robert Parsons, who drowned at Newark in 1572 at no great age, and was succeeded as Gentleman of the Chapel Royal by one William Byrd. To be fair, Parsons has left one work that is very well known today, his *Ave Maria*. I must admit to a longstanding dislike of the piece because of its foursquare opening gesture, immediately and tritely repeated in parallel tenths. But here, The Cardinall's Music prolong the opening salutation instead of repeating it, and the effect of those opening bars now seems to me entirely different. It's worth buying this disc just for this object lesson in word-setting.

Thankfully, there are other reasons for doing so. The Cardinall's Musick are at their best in this repertoire, and their performances have confidence and authority (barring occasional hootiness in the Magnificat). Like many composers of his time and place, Parsons can be heard to navigate between different styles according to the liturgical demands placed on him. He does so surefootedly, though one is often reminded of the work of others (Robert White in Retribue servo tuo, or older composers, such as Tye or even Taverner, in the Magnificat), or of stock gestures of the period. The notion of a personal style is largely a modern one, and so it's arguably pointless to tax Parsons with a lack of originality; besides, his O bone Jesu is a striking enough achievement that the reminiscences of the other works may well be intentional. In any case, Parsons certainly deserves the hearing that Carwood's musicians afford us, so this addition to the catalogue is very valuable.

Fabrice Fitch

Porpora

12 Cantatas to His Royal Highness Frederick Prince of Wales, Op 1 - No 7, Veggo la selva e il monte; No 8, Or che una nube ingrata; No 9, Destatevi, o pastori; No 10, Oh se fosse il mio core; No 11, Oh Dio, che non è vero; No 12, Dal povero mio cor

Arcangelo / Jonathan Cohen VC Hyperion (F) CDA67894 (78' • DDD • T/t)

Porpora

lestyn Davies counterten

Porpora Sei duetti latini sulla passione di nostro signore Gesù Cristo. Sonata XI (arr Clementi) -Fuga V; Fuga VI Anonymous Miserere Stile Galante / Stefano Aresi Pan Classics ® PC10243 (72' • DDD)





Two faces of an Italian in London explored on two new recordings Between 1733 and 1736 Porpora was the music director of the Opera of the Nobility, a company set up by disgruntled singers and aristocratic sponsors to provide fierce competition against Handel's monopoly of Italian opera on the London stage. Porpora does not deserve to be consigned as a mere footnote in Handelian histories; he was a talented composer in his own right and an influential teacher. One of his pupils was Farinelli and it is possible that the star castrato might have influenced the composer's London publication of 12 solo cantatas for soprano and alto (1735). As Carlo Vitali suggests in his booklet-note, these settings of poems by Metastasio might have been composed at different times during the previous decade but it's easy to imagine they were performed domestically by the cellist Prince of Wales (the dedicate), the composer at the

harpsichord and Farinelli – whose letters dating from his time in London describe several such occasions.

Jonathan Cohen and his new ensemble Arcangelo favour a larger and more diverse team of continuo players; the results are simultaneously luxurious and imaginative, and risk gilding the lily, but the musicianship is exquisite. Cohen's celloplaying is softly lyrical during the beautiful Or che una nube ingrata and Davies's coloratura shines in the lively outburst that concludes Oh se fosse il mio core; his embellishments are gorgeous in the lento 'Quella ferita ch'io porto in seno' (Oh Dio, che non è vero). The languid pastoral larghetto during Destatevi, o pastori is ideal for Davies's delightfully sensitive phrasing - although Cohen's artistic licence with instrumentation has a significant impact; the treble solo instrument for this cantata, unspecified in Porpora's publication, is probably intended for violin but Arcangelo choose to alternate fiddle with recorder. I hope they and a suitable soprano record a sequel disc of the remaining six cantatas.

Another obscure corner of Porpora's labours is illuminated by Stile Galante's sincere performances of six late duets written in 1754 and dedicated 'to be sung on Lent Fridays in the Chapel of His Most Serene Highness, the Electoral Prince of Saxony'. These Passion contemplations are accompanied by vivid organ and sinewy cello continuo; director Stefano Aresi varies the duo combinations from a pool of four experienced Italian singers. Greater delicacy might have benefited the full-blooded raw piety of proceedings. Some duets are longwinded and won't convert newcomers to Porpora but the jubilatory fourth duet, In boc vexillo Crucis, features extraordinary vocal imitations of declamatory trumpets sung boldly by sopranos Emanuela Galli and Francesca Cassinari. The disc's variety is enhanced by harpsichordist Andrea Friggi playing two Clementi adaptations of Porpora's violin sonatas.

David Vickers

R Schumann · C Schumann

'Portrait

C Schumann Drei Lieder, Op 12. Sechs Lieder, Op 13 - No 1, Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen; No 3, Liebeszauber; No 5, Ich hab' in deinem Auge. Loreley R Schumann Frauenliebe und -leben, Op 42. Gedichte der Königin Maria Stuart, Op 135. Myrthen, Op 25 - No 1, Widmung; No 3, Der Nussbaum; No 7, Die Lotosblume; No 9, Lied der Suleika; No 11, Lied der Braut I; No 12, Lied der Braut II. Der Himmel hat ein Träne geweint, Op 37 No 1. Volksliedchen, Op 51 No 2

BIS © BIS-SACD1834 (61' • DDD/DSD • T/t)

Bach Cantata Pilgrimage

Gramophone Awards 2011 Special Achievement Award





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John Wilson Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

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Collage

Currier, Chopin/Liszt, Liebermann, Scarlatti, Schumann Joyce Yang, piano

Joyce Yang, youngest ever medallist of the Van Cliburn Competition and winner of the Avery Fisher Career Grant, makes a colourful recording debut displaying her "romantic flair with musicianly elegance" (The New York Times)



J S Bach Goldberg Variations

Daniel-Ben Pienaar, piano

Following his traversal of Mozart's Piano Sonatas (AV 2209) -"Momentous Mozart" (Gramophone, Editor's Choice) - Daniel-Ben Pienaar offers further revelations in J.S. Bach's Goldberg Variations, complemented with Fourteen Canons, BWV 1087 and Stölzel's Bist du bei mir



Tchaikovsky Variations on a Rococo Theme Prokofiev Symphony No. 1 "Classical"

Gábor Takács-Nagy Miklós Perényi, cello Manchester Camerata

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Songs by husband and wife from Persson in Stockholm

Famed above all as a delectable Mozart singer, Miah Persson has also made her mark as a thoughtful recitalist. As these female portraits by Robert and Clara Schumann reveal, her naturally sweet, gleaming tone can encompass deeper, more sensuous shadings, as in her dreamy 'Die Lotosblume'. Persson proves an ideal advocate of Clara's often underrated Lieder, vivid in the story-telling of 'Loreley', all breathless excitement in the Mendelssohnian 'Liebeszauber', true and tender in the dulcet 'Liebst du um Schönheit'. In Robert's 'Lied der Suleika' her unvaried brightness rather misses the song's innigkeit. Elsewhere - say, in 'Der Nussbaum', or a deeply felt 'Lied der Braut' - she can swell into individual notes at the expense of a pure legato. But her mingled sensitivity and immediacy are always compelling, not least in the stark, spare Maria Stuart cycle.

In Frauenliebe und -leben Persson's youthful freshness of tone and eagerness of manner are constant assets. No performance of these songs could be less mawkish or matronly. Abetted by the sentient playing of Joseph Breinl, Persson touchingly conveys a journey from shy, dazed innocence (the opening song, in sarabande rhythm, is kept well moving), through excitement and joy in motherhood, to the shock of bereavement. The second song is fast and elated, more lebhaft than innig. (Persson seems more confident than most singers that she will win her paragon of manhood.) But she is ideally rapt and inward in No 6, where the woman confides her pregnancy to her husband, and lives the tragic final song intensely, the accusatory bitterness of the opening heralded by a keyboard sforzando that cuts like a knife. The recording picks up rather too much of the Stockholm hall's empty resonance, though this hardly diminishes pleasure in an enterprising recital from a soprano of charm, intelligence and natural communicative gifts.

Richard Wigmore

Victoria

Magnificats - Primi toni a 4; Primi toni a 8; Quarti toni; Quinti toni; Sexti toni a 12; Octavi toni. Masses - Alma redemptoris mater; Ave regina; Ave maris stella; De Beata Maria Virgine; Gaudeamus; Laetatus sum; O quam gloriosum; Pro victoria; Salve regina. Missa pro defunctis a 4. Officium Hebdomadae Sanctae. Ad cenam agni providi. Alma redemptoris mater. Ardens est cor meum. Ascendens Christus. Aurea luce et decore. Ave Maria. Ave maris stella (1581). Ave regina coelorum a 8. Beata es. Christe redemptor omnium. Conditor alme siderum. Vadam et circuibo civitatem. Date ei de fructu. Descendit angelus. Dixit Dominus.

Doctor bonus. Domine non sum dignus. Domine, probasti me. Dum complerentur dies Pentecostes. Duo Seraphim. Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum. Ego sum panis vivus. Gaude Maria Virgo. Hostis Herodes, Laetatus sum, Lauda mater ecclesia. Lauda Sion, Laudate Dominum, Laudate pueri. Litaniae de Beata Virgine. Magi viderunt stellam. Nigra sum. O decus apostolicum. O Doctor optime. O Domine Jesu Christe. O lux et decus Hispaniae. O magnum misterium. O quam gloriosum. O regem coeli. O sacrum convivium - a 4; a 6. O vos ommes. Pange lingua 'more hispano'. Pueri Hebraeorum. Quam pulchri sunt. Quem vidistis, pastores?. Regina coeli a 8. Resurrexi et adhuc tecum sum. Salve regina - a 6; a 8. Sancta Maria. Senex puerum portabat. Super flumina Babylonis. Surrexit pastor bonus. Tantum ergo. Tibi Christe. Trahe post te. Tu es Petrus. Ut queant laxis. Vadam et circuibo civitatem. Veni Creator Spiritus. Veni Sancte Spiritus. Vere languores nostros. Victimae paschali laudes. Vidi aguam. Vidi speciosam

Ensemble Plus Ultra / Michael Noone

Archiv (S) (10 477 9747AB10 (11h 18' • DDD • T/t)



Victoria's 400th marked with 10 discs of new recordings

With the year drawing to a close, at last there comes a project worthy in scope of one of the best-loved composers of the Renaissance, the 400th anniversary of whose death falls in 2011. To those of us who'd feared that multivolume anthologies devoted to Renaissance music (and from one of the big multinational record labels at that) were a thing of the past, this 10-CD Victoria set gives cause for hope. The 11 hours of music on offer represent both a sizeable portion and a representative sample of Victoria's output. In his all too brief booklet-note, Ensemble Plus Ultra's director, Michael Noone, mentions the need to rid Victoria's music of some of the hoarier clichés that have attached themselves to it not least the epithet 'mystical'. Amen to that.

The 90-odd works recorded here include 10 Masses, half of his work in the genre, covering most of his creative life. Apart from a welcome opportunity to hear the four-voice Requiem, overshadowed nowadays in favour of the later six-voice setting, the principal focus is on those Masses based directly or indirectly on Marian plainchants. From the early group, the Missa Ave maris stella boasts a particularly fine reading - lucid and surefooted, with none of the parts having to stray outside their registral comfort zones. Slightly later is the famous setting on O quam gloriosum, one of the clearer instances of Noone's attempt to blow some cobwebs off the ethereal vision of the composer. The motet is taken at quite a clip and some of that assertiveness rubs off on the Mass.

But most distinctive compositionally is the group of four Masses first published in 1600,



all for at least two choirs distributed between eight to 12 voices. Compared with the earlier settings these are compact and taut: unlike many composers writing for multiple choirs, Victoria recognised that their effect is enhanced when the material is not overlaboured. Contrary to a perception that dies hard, Victoria's habitual disposition tends toward the joyful; but the Missa Pro victoria is positively martial. Noone presses sackbuts and cornetts into service, appropriately enough, but despite moments of great poise, the blend between voices and instruments isn't always as close as it should be (try the opening of the second Agnus Dei). Besides, is poise really what's needed? The version from Le Parlement de Musique (Accord, 9/99 - nla), now over a dozen years old, really grabs the music by the scruff of the neck. More convincing (in fact one of the most successful discs of this set) is the Vespers music built around the 12-voice Mass and motet Laetatus sum, in which polyphony and plainchant, voices and instruments, converge in a grand statement that gives some idea of the music's rhetorical power, perhaps because the programming has a clear structure and a sense of purpose. The same might be said for the disc recorded at Lerma, with the choir supported by a memorably sonorous organ; the programme includes two fine Magnificats and the Missa Alma redemptoris mater. One imagines that the evocative location in both cases (the first a church in Tordesillas, the second in Lerma) was a powerful inspiration.

One of the advantages of including a Mass setting on a disc is the sense of underpinning it imparts to a programme; a similar cogency is achieved in the set of Lamentations (which were also issued earlier this year by the German Ensemble Officium – Christophorus, 7/11) because of their cyclical presentation. Where such a structure is lacking, as in the disc devoted entirely to the motets, the effect is more piecemeal, the performances somehow less distinctive. A notable exception is the transcription of the six-voice *Vadam et*

circuibo civitatem, in which the top line is richly ornamented and given to a soloist. In negotiating its pyrotechnics Clare Wilkinson shows considerable poise, which is to say not quite the last degree of abandon appropriate to a setting of the Song of Songs. Given the extent of Victoria's discography, though, it seems a shame that more such unusual performance contexts (unusual for us, that is) aren't presented here. Plus Ultra has succeeded in blowing some of the cobwebs off him but whether Victoria emerges newminted, his music fit to face its fifth century, is another matter.

Fabrice Fitch

Whitbourn

Son of God Mass^{ab}. Winter's Wait^b. Give us the wings of faith^b. A Brief Story of Peter Abelard^{ab}. A Prayer from South Africa. Living Voices^{ac}. Requiem canticorum^{ab}. All shall be Amen and Alleluia^{bd} Westminster Williamson Voices / James Jordan with ^a Jeremy Powell ssax ^d Jonathan Palmer Lakeland pf ^d Jacob Ezzo perc ^bKen Cowan org ^cRonn Carroll narr Naxos § 8 572737 (65' • DDD)



Composer-cum-producer Whitbourn marks 9/11

Listening to this disc in the run-up to the 10th anniversary of 9/11 elicited mixed emotions. Whitbourn (b1963) clearly knows how to write effectively for voices, mostly in a chordal texture, always resolutely diatonic and with a heavy slant towards the 'atmospheric'. Tempi are predominantly slow (accentuated here by the generous acoustic of Princeton University's Chapel), leaving one hungry for more variety. The musical language veers from the ecstatic (Whitacresque) to the banal (19th-century French parish Mass).

The disc's themes, however, are utterly profound: life and death. They inform the full-scale *Son of God Mass*, based on an orchestral score for the synonymous BBC series filmed in the Holy Land, and the *Requiem canticorum*. This smaller-scale work is worthy of, say, Grechaninov, with its Slavic Kontakion-like simplicity.

The choral highlight is undoubtedly the strikingly beautiful *Winter's Wait* which sets a text by the late Robert Tear. The tone of Westminster Williamson Voices is well honed, muscular and rich, with only occasional lapses in intonation.

A bonus piece, the instrumental *A Brief Story of Peter Abelard*, is the strongest and most satisfying piece on the disc. Originally scored for alto saxophone and piano, its new guise for soprano sax and organ proves a major reportorial addition. Jeremy Powell's saxophone-playing is compelling, a fusion of Kenny G at his most mellifluous and Jan Garbarek at his most esoteric. A further plus

is Ken Cowan's outstanding organ-playing, which is a treat in its own right.

Malcolm Riley

Bejun Mehta

Britten Lord, what is man? Purcell Job's Curse Finzi I said to love, Op 19b - At Middle-Field Gate in February. Oh fair to see, Op 13 - Since we loved. A Young Man's Exhortation, Op 14 - The Sigh Gurney Down by the Salley Gardens Hely-Hutchinson Set in the Manner of Handel Howells King David. The Widow Bird. The Little Boy Lost L Berkeley The Horseman Quilter Three Shakespeare Songs, Op 6. Five Shakespeare Songs, Op 23 - Hey, ho, the wind and the rain. It was a lover and his lass. Take, O take those lips away Stanford La Belle Dame sans merci Purcell/Tippett Music for a While Vaughan Williams The House of Life - No 2, Silent Noon. Linden Lea. Songs of Travel - Bright is the Ring of Words Warlock Jillian of Berry Bejun Mehta counterten Julius Drake pf Harmonia Mundi (F) HMC90 2093 (66' • DDD)



The American countertenor sets out his English stall

Despite the best efforts of a brave few, countertenors still tend to be pigeonholed as recitalists. Alongside David Daniels, Bejun Mehta has been one of the most active in exploring the mainstream song repertoire and his programme here offers a wellplanned survey of the English musical landscape of Howells, Quilter, Finzi and Vaughan Williams that is usually the province of other voice types. Any suspicion that these songs might sound lukewarm or tentative in the hands of a countertenor is soon dispelled by Mehta's invigorating singing of Quilter's 'Blow, blow, thou winter wind' and the keen way he dramatises Stanford's 'La Belle Dame sans merci'. The verbal point he brings to a handful of Purcell songs in arrangements by Britten and Tippett is also appreciated.

By contrast, the more languid and sensitive songs in which one expects a countertenor to excel - Finzi's 'The Sigh' or 'Since we loved', for example, both warmly accompanied by Julius Drake - bring to the fore an underlying problem. At just the point where beauty is most called for, the voice is apt to sound hard and edgy, especially at the top, taking the shine off otherwise perceptive performances. There are only a couple of songs where Mehta and Daniels overlap on CD - Vaughan Williams's 'Linden Lea' and Purcell's 'Music for a While' - and in both it is Daniels who is the more vocally seductive despite singing in higher keys. As an example of what a countertenor can achieve in the standard recital repertoire, his disc 'Serenade' (Virgin, 5/00) would be a better place to start. Richard Fairman

'Frottole: Songs from the Courts of Renaissance Italy'

Anonymous Surge. Recerchar de
Benedictus. La tromba sona. Tente alora
Bossinensis Recercars - Nos 8, 12 & 15 Brocco
Se mia trista e dura sorte Brumel Noe noe
Capirola Stavasi amor dormendo Cara lo non
compro. Per dolor me bagno el viso Compère
Alons fer nos barbes Hesdimois Tucto il mundo
è fantasia Isaac Benedictus Obrecht La turturella.
Rumfeltier Josquin Desprez Una musca
Tromboncino Occhi mei lassi. Vale diva. Su su leva;
Dolci ire Urrede Nunca fue pena mayor
Ulrike Hofbauer sop Modena Consort
Pan Classics © PC10246 (65' • DDD • T/t)



Exploring the Italian 'frottola' tradition in the years after 1500

The Modena Consort basically comprises four players of Renaissance flute. Not, on the face of it, a very promising ensemble for a full CD, but they have drafted in the services of the lutenist René Genis and particularly the gloriously persuasive soprano Ulrike Hofbauer; and on this occasion they also have a guest percussionist, Hiram Santos.

The music here is mainly from the earliest printed music books, produced in the first decade of the 16th century by Ottaviano Petrucci in Venice. Three of Petrucci's first collections were of secular songs presented without any text and therefore presumably aimed at an instrumental ensemble – of which a group of four flutes is as good as any, though the purity of the Renaissance flute makes it hard for the players to introduce much variety of sound. To compensate, though, they have skill, precision and a delicious warmth of colour: this is controlled and professional playing.

Hofbauer sings frottole mostly with lute accompaniments from the versions of Franciscus Bossinensis (1509), to which occasional lines from the original polyphony are played on flutes. This works well, though there is always something about Renaissance flutes (like recorders) that makes the ear confused as to which octave is being heard. Still, for me the real importance of the disc is in the unimaginably gentle way Ulrike Hofbauer approaches the lovely and underrated repertory of the Italian frottola: with generally slow tempi, she brings out more of the pathos and intimacy of the music than is often heard. This is hard to do and even harder to control: she manages, though at the price of occasional lost energy.

The elegant packaging includes full texts and translations into three languages; helpful would have been more information on the individual pieces and why they were chosen.

David Fallows

'Jauchzet dem Herren'

Bernhard Aus der Tiefe ruf' ich Herr, zu dir Bruhns Prelude and Fugue in E minor. Jauchzet dem Herren alle Welt Buxtehude Dixit Dominus Domino meo, BuxWV17. Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin (Klaglied) Förtsch Aus der Tiefe Scheidt Canzon cornetto J Sommer O höchster Gott. Chanson (Canzon) a 4 Weiland Jachzet Gott alle Lande

Hans Jörg Mammel ten La Fenice / Jean Tubéry Alpha (E) ALPHA179 (68' • DDD)



Psalm-settings from 17th-century Germany

Finely adorned with Rubens's study of King David with his harp, this release focuses on 17th-century north German psalm-settings for tenor and ensemble. If that sounds rather earnest, the idea is quickly dispelled by the opening track, Buxtehude's Dixit Dominus, delivered as a joyous clamour of voice, strings and harpsichord with a lusty bassoon adding both weight and definition. That this is a surprisingly vivid programme is partly because of the colour offered by combinations of winds and strings, and partly a result of an intimate recording which means that no one is allowed to be a shrinking violet. The closeness is perhaps because it was made in an organ loft, that of St Mary and St Pancras in Mariendrebber, presumably chosen to allow the use of the building's 17th-century organ; but although the instrumental playing reaches the standard to be expected from Jean Tubéry's classy ensemble, the balance can be messy, with the strings at times uncomfortably prominent.

Tenor Hans Jörg Mammel has an incisive voice but he struggles in places to find easy movement and grateful toneproduction; his best moments are Mit Fried und Freud, Buxtehude's gently throbbing lament for his father, and Christoph Bernhard's Aus der Tiefe, a piece that defies expectations with its overall cheerfulness (initiated by a rocket-like blast-off from the depths in its opening bars) while also including a Monteverdilike lament at its heart. Some of the other rarities also deserve their exposure: a canzona by Johann Sommer floats cornetts and violins over a slow-moving swell of continuo; and Bruhns's Jauchzet dem Herren is a lengthy but skilfully shaped piece graced by gleefully florid vocal lines and even a fugue. Fans of the richness of German 17th-century Baroque should certainly investigate, though they may be disappointed by the fact that the bookletnotes give information on only some of the pieces.

Lindsay Kemp

'Liaisons'

Cimarosa II matrimonio segreto - Sinfonia; Perdonate, signor mio Haydn Quando la rosa, HobXXIVb/3. Signor, voi sapete, HobXXIVb/7. Vada adagio, Signorina, HobXXIVb/12 Mozart Le nozze di Figaro - Giunse alfin il momento...Deh vieni, non tardar; Un moto di gioia, K579. Così fan tutte - Una donna a quindici anni. Voi avete un cor fedele, K217. Ah se in ciel, benigne stelle, K538. Chi sà, chi sà, qual sia, K582 Salieri Armida - Tremo, bell'idol mio. La scuola de' gelosi - Sinfonia

Chen Reiss *SOP* L'Arte del Mondo / Werner Ehrhardt
Onyx ® ONYX4068 (56' • DDD • T/t)



Solo recording debut from a 'one to watch' soprano

What a stimulating assemblage of arias, and in intelligent, standard-setting performances. Soprano Chen Reiss creates a rewarding vocal cross section of Mozart-era Vienna – not as easy as one might think given the drop in quality between Mozart, Haydn and then everyone else. Resourcefully, Reiss groups her 'finds' – some hardly known because they're one-off arias written for forgotten operas by other composers – around engaging archetypes such as the wily maidservant who controls her master.

Unexpected insights arise at every turn. Some of these replacement arias seem to have been written on autopilot – as much as Mozart ever could be so accused – but sometimes with an air of experimentation, transforming operatic forms and manners from the past. Some of the more unassuming Haydn items feel more like songs than arias – nice tunes with interesting accompaniments that don't attempt any particular character portrait but which foster a new appreciation when heard alongside established ones.

Neither Salieri nor Cimarosa is all that flattered by comparisons, but Reiss makes them feel like worthwhile companions, always looking to find their specific character and never falling into soubrette cuteness. The opening Salieri aria shows her using the lightest of voices – in contrast to Haydn's 'Vada adagio, Signorina', with her sounding almost like a mezzo-soprano. My favourite moment is how wonderstruck her Susanna sounds while absorbing the beauties of the night in the Act 4 *Figaro* aria.

Reiss's coloratura shows none of Cecilia Bartoli's aspirating that can have a splintering effect in vocal runs; hers are all of a piece. Trills are excellent. The one disappointment is Reiss's conservatism with ornaments (there are few). Then again, she may not need them with her interpretative resources. The orchestra under Werner Ehrhardt's vigorous direction has a nice, woody sound, refreshingly devoid of gloss.

David Patrick Stearns

NIHESIUDIC

An inside view of who's before the mics and what they're recording

Colin Davis's Nielsen

The London Symphony Orchestra has reached the second and final phase of its live Nielsen cycle. Microphones were hanging for the LSO's Barbican performances of the First Symphony in October with the Second and Third coming up. Accounts of all will be issued on LSO Live.

Barber from Conspirare

Conspirare, the choral group directed by Craig Hella Johnson and signed to Harmonia Mundi, were at the Sauda Hall in Indiana at the end of September recording choral works by Samuel Barber, including new arrangements of The Lovers and the Easter Chorale.

• Invernizzi sings Vivaldi

Fabio Bonizzoni and his ensemble, La Risonanza, will accompany soprano Roberta Invernizzi in a recital of Vivaldi arias for release on Glossa. Invernizzi previously recorded a selection of Italian arias by Handel for Glossa, also with Bonizzoni and his musicians in support.

• Eavesdropping on Voces8

Twitter messaging courtesy of AJM Productions reveals that vocal ensemble Voces8 were on 'wonderful' form recording music by Brahms, Reger, Tippett, Palestrina and Monteverdi in Cambridge recently. AJMP were producing the session, from which the resulting disc will be released shortly on Signum.



Grimaud goes live for DG

Pianist Hélène Grimaud (above) has recently recorded two Mozart concertos for DG in what will be her first live recording for the yellow label. Grimaud played the Concertos in F, K459, and A, K488, with the chamber ensemble of the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and described the two concerts from which the recordings are taken as 'very special'.

Sibelius ends, and begins

BIS has celebrated the end of its Complete Sibelius Edition and promptly started recording two new complete Sibelius symphony cycles. Osmo Vänskä's Minnesota cycle and Okko Kamu's Lahti cycle both began taping earlier this year.



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Ludwig van Beethoven - Fidelio Celebratory performance for the opening of the Large House of the Dresden Staatstheater in 1948 Christel Goltz, Bernd Aldenhoff, Joseph Herrmann, Gottlob Frick, Elfride Trötschel, Erich Zimmermann, Heinrich Pflanzl. Horst Weber, Werner Faulhaber, Staatskapelle Dresden, Joseph Keliberth, Semperoper Edition Vol. 2 CD & DVD PH10033

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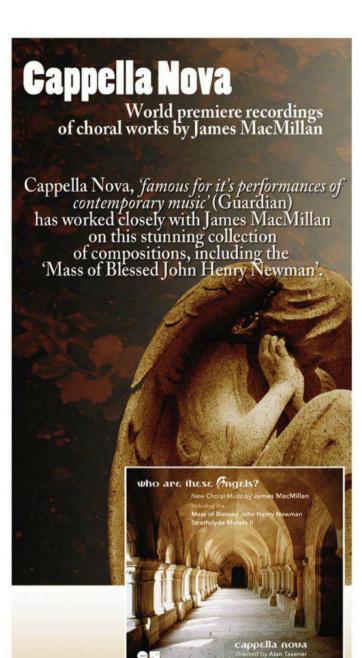


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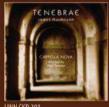
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'Song Wants to be Light'

Brouwer Son Mercedes Cal Cinco Canciones Carrillo Missa sine nomine -Kyrie; Gloria Clausen Prayer Fernández Las casas. Vértigo de Lluvia Hernández La rosa roja Matamoros Juramente Repilado Chan-Chan S Rodriguez Hay quien precisa. Locuras E Silva Para ti Valera Babalù en La Habana Vieia. Conoces un fuego que no da calor

National Chorus of Cuba; Entrevoces Chamber Choir / Digna Guerra

Dabringhaus und Grimm ® MDG602 1704-2 (54' • DDD)



Choral works from South America and beyond

Music from Cuba generally has a more prominent presence on disc than that of the majority of her Latin American neighbours, whether it be the guitar music of Leo Brouwer or the phenomenon that was the Buena Vista Social Club. Both - and much lying in between - are represented in this nicely sung disc of unaccompanied pieces (aside from the odd bit of percussion here and there), Brouwer by his gently swinging Son Mercedes and BVSC by Francisco Repilado (aka Compay Segundo) and Chan-Chan, in Jorge Martínez's idiomatic arrangement.

Ten of the 14 composers and arrangers hail from Cuba, with one apiece from the USA (René Clausen), Venezuela (César Alejandro Carillo), Argentina (Liliana Cangiano, arranger of Rodriguez's Locuras) and Mexico (Martínez). The pick is the youngest, Wilma Alba Cal (b1988), whose Cinco Canciones on texts by Lorca are sung by the Entrevoces Chamber Choir - presumably made up of members of the National Choir, although the booklet is silent about them (as it is on any of the works, and there are only extremely brief entries on the composers). The last of the Canciones is also the title-track, 'The Song Wants to be Light', and exhibits the same virtues as its companions - focused expressive intent contained in concise forms.

Of the other works, Valera's two songs make an attractive opening. Electo Silva's Para Ti and two arrangements (of Hernández and Matamoros) show real flair for choral writing. Why Carillo's Missa sine nomine is not given whole, just the Kyrie and Gloria being offered (and in the wrong order), is not explained - there was room for the whole work, surely.

The Cuban National Choir and their presumed spin-off sing with commitment and affection for the music and seem a wellbalanced group, although the tone is rather edgy in the sopranos' upper registers. Nicely balanced sound, too.

Guy Rickards

'The Vanishing Nordic Chorale



JS Bach Du er, opstandne sejershelt (arr Pachelbel). Lover den Herre. O Jesus så søt, O Jesus så mild. Var hälsad, sköna morgonstund Buxtehude Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott. Klag-Lied Charpentier/ Du Caurroy Från Gud will jag ej vika Crüger Hvorledes skal jeg møde Grieg Den store hvide flok (arr Spray) Hassler Sänd, Herre, dina änglar ut Karosi Improvisation on Prelude XIII & Ein feste Burg Mendelssohn Forlen os freden, Herre, nu Neumark/Bach Min själ, låt Gud i allt få råda (arr Spray) Nielsen Denne er dagen, som Herren har gjort. Der er en vei. Preludes - I; VI; XXIII Pedersøn Vor Gud han er så fast en borg hoppas Traditional Mitt hjerte elltid vanker. Der

Praetorius Lovsjung Krist Scheidt På dig jag mange skal komme (both arr Spray)

Musik Ekklesia / Philip Spray

Sono Luminus © DSL92128 (61' • DDD)



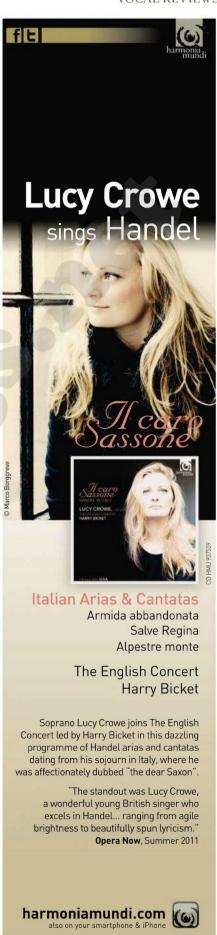
Tracing the journey of music 🚾 from Europe to America

There is something enchanting about this disc that opens it up to a wider circle of listeners than those who simply want to hear the aria 'Lobe den Herren' from Bach's Cantata No 137 sung in Norwegian, or Mendelssohn's setting of Luther's prayer 'Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich' performed in Danish. Philip Spray, music director of the Indianapolis-based Musik Ekklesia, has done a lot of research in tracking the travels of familiar chorale texts and tunes to the Nordic countries and thence, through processes of emigration, to the New World. His conclusion, as the disc's title indicates, is that the tradition has now largely died out, but he has resurrected a good many examples of cross-fertilisation that make for a thoroughly appealing sequence.

Thus Praetorius's Christmas anthem 'Psallite' turns up in Swedish, and Bach's 'O Jesulein süss, O Jesulein mild' in Norwegian. The American soloists and chorus, drilled by diction coaches, sound like they're at ease with the languages and sing with fluency and clarity. The period instrumental ensemble has an agreeable pungency and the new Baroque-style Opus X organ in the First Lutheran Church of Boston has an attractively reedy quality on which the excellent Hungarian organist Bálint Karosi capitalises.

This is a disc with intriguing slants on music that we may know from elsewhere and in other manifestations, and the connections are explained in the booklet-notes. But it also contains works by Grieg, Nielsen and Buxtehude, whose credentials as Nordic composers earn them a warranted place in the programme.

Geoffrey Norris



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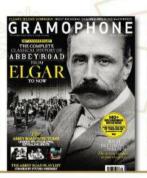
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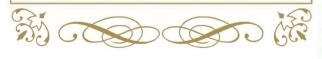




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Mike Ashman reviews Poulenc's Carmélites:

'Muti can sometimes push Poulenc's simple writing to points of hysteria that more suggest Stravinsky or Bartók' > REVIEW ON PAGE 93



David Vickers reviews Vivaldi's Farnace:

'This marvellous recording reveals that Vivaldi's theatrical fantasy is a journey worth taking' > REVIEW ON PAGE 97

Busoni

0 **Doktor Faust - excerpts** Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau bar Richard Lewis ten Menhistopheles lan Wallace bass-barWagner Heather Harper sop...... Duchess of Parma John Cameron bass......Duke of Parma Ambrosian Singers; Chorus from the Royal Academy of Music; London Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra /

LPO (M) LPO0056 (74' • ADD • S) Recorded live at the Royal Festival Hall, London, November 13, 1959



Sir Adrian Boult

Boult's carefully chosen suite from Busoni's Faust

Busoni started composing his Faust – based not on Goethe but on 16th-century puppet plays - after rejecting the Wandering Jew, Leonardo da Vinci and Don Juan as potential subjects for an opera. (No pressure there, then.) He didn't live to finish Helen of Trov's appearance in scene 2 or the quite optimistic closing scene in which Faust gives his life for a child. Until sketches for these scenes were discovered in 1974 (a new edition was made then by Antony Beaumont), the world, such as it cared about the opera, made do with a completion by Busoni's pupil Philipp Jarnach. A skein of successful productions, starting with ENO's in 1987, have since confirmed the work's worth on stage.

Busoni's own polemics stressed that, unlike Wagner's, his words and music fulfilled different functions and that each section of the work had a distinct symphonic form scene 1 a dance suite, scene 2 a scherzo, chorale and fugue. The scale of the opera is still late-Romantic, and its sound world an obvious contemporary of Strauss, Schreker and even Berg, although the music remains tonal. Busoni's method of assembling his score from unfinished or already existing works parallels that of Karlheinz Stockhausen for some of his Licht cycle.

The present release continues the interest shown by the LPO's own label in historical material and in less established repertoire. Characteristically unblushing notes by John Amis (both from 1959 and now) introduce the project. Boult - who conducted the work in Britain for the first time in 1937 with his then BBC Symphony Orchestra - presents here a concert suite of nuggets from the score (75 minutes out of some three hours), reportedly after consultation with Fischer-Dieskau, then the work's leading interpreter. The performance can hardly have been overrehearsed but proceeds with confidence - this conductor was always at home with German operatic music. Alongside Fischer-Dieskau, a cast of British worthies work hard on unfamiliar territory (Richard Lewis and Heather Harper especially) to match the German's fluent Faust.

This issue does provide a historic starting point for investigating the score that sounds quite OK for its age - although the LPO should certainly have made a link to a libretto accessible. But, as with Lulu without its completed Act 3, it's the wrong version. Nagano's recording of the complete opera, with Dietrich Henschel as Faust (and Fischer-Dieskau in the spoken role of the Poet). includes both Jarnach's and Beaumont's completions - unlike the recent DVD from Zurich, which opts for Jarnach. Mike Ashman Selected comparisons:

Lyon Op, Nagano (11/99) (ERAT) 3984 25501-2 Zurich Op, Jordan (3/08) (ARTH) 22 101 283; 2 101 284

Campra

Le carnaval de Venise		
Marina De Liso sop	Léonore	
Salomé Haller sop	Isabelle	
Alain Buet bass	Léandre	
Andrew Foster-Williams bass	Rodolphe	
Les Chantres du Centre de Musique Baroque de		
$\label{lem:concert} \textbf{Versailles; Le Concert Spirituel Chorus and Orchestra}$		
/ Hervé Niquet		

Glossa M @ GCD921622 (129' • DDD)

Niquet conducts a work with its feet set both in France and Italy

André Campra (1660-1744) was born to an Italian father and French mother; so it's peculiarly fitting that he should have been the composer of this curious but attractive work which is set in Venice to a libretto that veers between languages. Le carnaval de Venise is a

comédie lyrique, first staged at the Paris Opéra in 1699. It takes the form of a play within a play. The Prologue is set in a theatre, where - as in Ariadne auf Naxos – preparations are under way for an opera performance. The opera in question is Orfeo nell'inferi: Pluto is charmed by Orpheus who is allowed to leave with Eurydice; Orpheus looks back and loses his wife for ever. In between comes the main story of love, both requited and unrequited, and, after the opera, Carnival leads a company of masks - joined by Eurydice, surprisingly – in the final revels.

There is much here that Campra inherited from the tragedies of Lully. The Prologue includes the customary praise of 'the greatest King in the world' - Louis XIV - and also a reference to 'a great Prince', the Dauphin. There are divertissements, the dances are enchanting, the vocal lines move seamlessly from recitative to aria, and the accompaniments are often fully scored. Campra is equally adept at setting Italian words: Isabelle's 'Mi dice la speranza', charmingly sung by Salomé Haller, is but one example of a da capo aria, complete with melismas. And there's a beautiful Italian version of the Lullian sommeil scene in the form of a flute-accompanied trio, 'Luci belli, dormite'.

It is Isabelle who has the most intense scene: mistakenly believing her lover Léandre to be dead, she prepares to kill herself. Her opening words, 'Mes yeux, fermez-vous à jamais', return twice as a refrain. (You wait in vain for them to round off the aria, as they do in Véronique Gens's recital 'Tragédiennes' - Virgin Classics, 8/06.) Despite this, and the wounded feelings of the unrequited lovers, the predominant mood is upbeat. Hervé Niquet and his forces - there are no weak links - give a performance to brighten up the dullest mood. Richard Lawrence

Gluck 	
Ezio	
Sonia Prina contr	Ezio
Ann Hallenberg mez	Fulvia
Max Emanuel Cencic counterten	Valentiniano
Topi Lehtipuu ten	Massimo
Mayuko Karasawa sop	Onoria
Julian Prégardien ten	Varo
Il Complesso Barocco / Alan Curtis	
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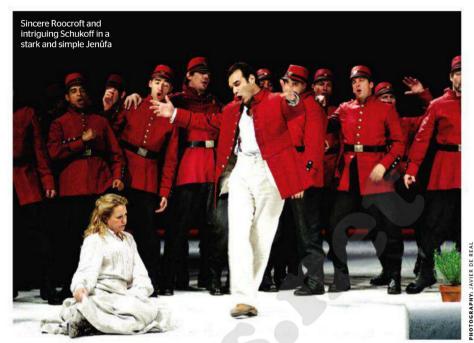


Early Gluck from Alan Curtis and a shrewdly chosen cast

Long before he set out to purge opera of excess and 'abuses' with his epoch-making Orfeo and Alceste, Gluck composed reams of Italian opere serie for assorted European theatres. Premiered in Prague in 1750, Ezio uses essentially the same Metastasio libretto set by Handel 18 years earlier - though in deference to ladies in the Prague audience, Gluck tactfully jettisoned several passages denigrating the female sex. The elaborate, vaguely historical plot, set in ancient Rome under Emperor Valentiniano III, is the usual Metastasio brew of politics and amorous intrigue. To simplify, the victorious General Ezio, in love with Fulvia, is framed for attempted murder of Valentiniano (who also inconveniently loves Fulvia) by her treacherous father Massimo, sworn enemy of the Emperor. Predictably, all comes right in the end, with Massimo's villainy exposed and Fulvia and Ezio happily united.

There are occasional moments of garrulous or bland routine in Gluck's score (shorn, on these discs, of several arias for the minor characters) but also many numbers of dramatic power and touching lyrical pathos. Curiously for the opera's baddie, Massimo gets two of the most alluring arias, including a haunting one with oboe obbligato that Gluck (like Handel, an inveterate recycler) later quarried for *Orfeo*'s scene in the Elysian Fields. Other highlights include Ezio's tender love song to Fulvia, featuring Gluck's characteristic blend of spareness and sensuality, a magnificent scena for the despairing Fulvia, and the dramatic trio of conflict that closes Act 2.

As in his Handel recordings, the ever-prolific Alan Curtis conducts with mingled elegance and fire, pacing the drama expertly and drawing vital playing from his period band (not least the first oboe, always crucial in Gluck) that goes beyond mere good style. His cast, several of them Curtis regulars, are shrewdly chosen: youthful of tone, stylistically aware and always intensely alive to the meaning of the text, in aria and recitative. Max Emanuel Cencic, as Valentiniano, fields a full, un-hooty countertenor, while Topi Lehtipuu is suave in Massimo's lyrical music and splendidly incisive in his Act 2 'rage' aria. Best of all are Sonia Prina in the title-role, her contralto both rich and keen-edged, and Ann Hallenberg, whose high mezzo can veer from plangent lyricism to flame-toned declamation. Her thrilling singing of Fulvia's Act 3 scena is properly the opera's emotional climax. While Ezio may not be an out-and-out masterpiece, this first-rate recording, enhanced by an informative essay from Bruce Alan Brown, should scotch the



notion that *Orfeo* appeared like a Gluckian bolt from the blue. **Richard Wigmore**

Janáček

Jenůfa	
Amanda Roocroft sop	Jenůfa
Deborah Polaski sop	Kostelnička
Miroslav Dvorský ten	Laca
Nikolai Schukoff ten	Števa
Mette Ejsing contr	Grandmother Buryja
Károly Szemerédy bar	Foreman of the Mill
Sandra Ferrández sop	Barena
Miguel Sola bass	Mayor
Marta Mathéu mez	Mayor's Wife
Marta Ubieta mez	Karolka
María José Suárez mez	Shepherdess
Elena Poesina sop	Jano

Chorus and Orchestra of the Teatro Real, Madrid /
Ivor Bolton

Stage director Stéphane Braunschweig
Opus Arte (₹) 22 OA 1055 D (128' • 16:9 •
LPCM stereo & DTS 5.1 • 0 • s)
Recorded live, October 2009



DVD of Stéphane Braunschweig's minimalist staging of Jenůfa

Stéphane Braunschweig's production dates back to 1996, when it played host to a memorable series of performances at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris with the extraordinary Kostelnička of Anja Silja and Simon Rattle as conductor. The production has been on its travels since then, but seems not to have been filmed until it arrived at the Teatro Real in Madrid two years ago.

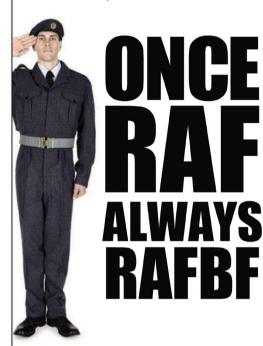
Braunschweig gives us Jenufa stark and simple, the stage almost bare, the opera's emotions stripped to the bone. Realism has given way to a few, sparing symbolic gestures, such as the sails of the windmill which rise up through the floor at the start (though not the end) of the performance. The only object on stage throughout the second act is the baby's cot, placed at the apex of a triangle of walls which gives the effect of it being in a constant close-up.

Nothing is allowed to deflect concentration from the central human drama. Amanda Roocroft has won laurels as Jenufa in various stage productions and comes across as a deeply sincere performer here, even if the voice is apt to turn shrill at the top. As Kostelnička, Deborah Polaski plays a formal, reserved, very respectable woman who exudes authority in the community, and her very understatement is moving in its own way. Miroslav Dvorský sings strongly as Laca, though without much individuality (think what Jon Vickers and Philip Langridge used to make of the role), and Nikolai Schukoff proves the more intriguing brother as vacillating Števa. As Grandmother Buryja, Mette Ejsing is rather on the young side.

The singers need a lot of intensity from the pit to sustain them, more, in fact, than Ivor Bolton's controlled performance with its brightly etched rhythms allows. Although Glyndebourne's rival DVD from 1989 (ArtHaus Musik, 11/01) may be showing its age a little, it offers a richer experience: the more realistic pictures of Moravian country life may not be a huge gain but the unbuttoned playing of the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Andrew Davis certainly is. This is also where Silja's Kostelnička and Langridge's Laca are to be found and the higher emotional level of the performance makes Glyndebourne the recommended choice.

Richard Fairman

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CPO (F) (2) CPO777 657-2 (146' • DDD)



Orff's opera, first produced for Shakespeare's 400th birthday

Behind Carl Orff's music for Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream lies the sordid tale of the Nazi banning of the music of the Jewish Mendelssohn. When a replacement score for the play was sought, Orff responded. He had apparently already been working on music for the play for many years, and he then went on reworking it for a further 25 - coming up with a final version for Shakespeare's 400th-birthday celebrations in 1964.

Unlike Mendelssohn's score, with its many discrete orchestral movements, Orff produced one in which words, music and stage directions are conceived as an organic whole. He uses varied and exotic instruments, such as mandolin, harmonica and cimbalom, with onstage trumpeters for fanfares (quoting from Carmina Burana) and a large body of exotic percussion instruments. The rustics have their own little onstage musical ensemble and their own lively march-song borrowed from Orff's Die Kluge. There are eloquent evocations of moonlight and the rustic locations, and a graceful setting of 'Ye Spotted Snakes'. Bottom's 'The Ousel Cock', though, is punctuated simply by an onstage double bass, and until the final act (which, as in Mendelssohn's version, uses plenty of music) much of the score consists of little more than single-note interjections or chords curiously reminiscent of Bernard Herrmann's score for Psycho. Altogether there is little music that could sensibly be extracted from the play.

What underlies this recording is a staged performance of Shakespeare's play in the standard German translation of August Wilhelm Schlegel. That, I guess, is not likely to have ongoing appeal to English speakers, and it does not invite detailed comment here. What is important is that Orff's music impresses me greatly. He may be criticised for the simplicity of his musical style; but, even if that ever was a fault, it surely produces something eminently appropriate here. Though obviously written specifically for Schlegel's German translation, the music would fit Shakespeare's original text equally well. Perhaps, therefore, this recording

would serve its purpose most admirably if it were to persuade a Shakespearean producer to take up Orff's score in the English-speaking theatre. Andrew Lamb

Poulenc



Dialogues des Carmelites	
Christopher Robertson bar	Marquis de la Force
Dagmar Schellenberger sop	Blanche de la Force
Gordon Gietz ten	Chevalier de la Force
Anja Silja contr	Madame de Croissy
Gwynne Geyer sop	Madame Lidoine
Barbara Dever mez	Mère Marie
Laura Aikin Soeur sop	Soeur Constance
Annamaria Popescu contr	Mère Jeanne
Mario Bolognesi bar	L'Aumônier
Gregory Bonfatti ten	Commissaire 1
Ernesto Panariello bar	Commissaire 2
Philippe Fourcade bar	Le Geôlier
Danilo Serraiocco bar	Thierry
Francesco Musinu bar	Javelinot
Charge and Orchestra of La Sca	la Milan /

Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, Milan / Riccardo Muti

Stage director Robert Carsen

ArtHaus Musik (F) 22 107 315 (149' • NTSC • 16:0 • PCM stereo & DD 5.1 • O • s)



Remastering for reissue of a 2004 telecast of Carsen's production

Modern production-hater and musical conservative Riccardo Muti must have thought he was in seventh heaven when he discovered a staging of a tonal 1950s opera that was (a) set in the historical period in which it was set and (b) put most of the cast downstage facing the conductor all the time.

But that isn't to denigrate Robert Carsen's minimalist, rather Wieland Wagner-esque production of Poulenc's tragedy. True, until the final mass guillotining scene, little out of the ordinary and naturalistic happens, except that there is no scenery save essential chairs and benches, not even a crucifix. Scene changes and atmosphere are created wholly through Jean Kalman's state-of-the-art lighting of a large, bare stage space surrounded by black masking and by Carsen's detailed, realistic direction of the singing actors. If anything, Muti's contribution is the more radical - or, at least, unusual. In his understandable urge to vary as much as possible the pace and dynamics of a score that can seem like an endless ocean of recitative, he sometimes pushes Poulenc's deliberately simple (but never simplistic) writing to points of hysteria that more suggest Stravinsky or Bartók. It's a view, and mostly it works although the price of trailing the sisters' doom by pointing up the guillotine leitmotif in the music so strongly in the first Blanche/ Constance duet in Act 1 (and other similar anticipations) is the undercutting of the score's long-term dramatic suspense. The cast are superb. There can have been few who have not made much of Madame de Croissy in this work's stage history, and Anja Silja delivers a performance every bit as concentrated as her Sentas, Leonores and Emilia Martys. It's quite frightening when she rises from her death bed. As the major novice sisters, Dagmar Schellenberger and Laura Aikin are in exceptional voice and focus.

Sound and vision in this remastered reissue of a 2004 telecast are unfussily matched to Carsen's production. One grouse: the whole of the final scene is in Latin. Do ArtHaus's subtitlers assume that we speak that language but not the French of the rest of the piece? And that final scene onstage? Well, no guillotines are on view... Mike Ashman

Terradellas





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Sesostri	
Sunhae Im sop	Sesostri
Alexandrina Pendatchanska sop	Nitocri
Kenneth Tarver ten	Amasi
Ditte Andersen sop	Artenice
Tom Randle ten	Fanete
Raffaella Milanesi sop	Orgonte

La Real Compañía Ópera de Cámara / Juan Bautista Otero

RCOC Records (F) (3) RCOC1102-3 (3h 55' • DDD • T/t)



Barcelona forces reveal another opera seria by Terradellas

Domènec Terradellas (1713-51) was a Spaniard who made his career in Italy. Naples, where he studied, reverted to Spanish control two years after his arrival; but, musically speaking, he was as Italian as Neapolitan contemporaries such as Porpora, Vinci, Leo and Pergolesi. He spent a year in London but his greatest successes seem to have been in Rome.

Sesostri, his last opera, was staged shortly before his premature death. The booklet states that the libretto is by Zeno and Pietro Pariati, whereas the New Grove Opera insists that Pariati alone was the author. Be that as it may, it's a classical opera seria in three acts. There are no duets: the only variation from the usual succession of secco recitative and aria comes in three accompanied recitatives and a trio. The final 'coro' for the surviving characters is over in 52 seconds. And it's long, just over three-and-a-half hours, but don't be put off: it's a splendid work.

Sesostri is memorable on several counts. First of all, Terradellas has a great gift of melody, in the fashionable galant style. His tunes, often based on triadic figures, fall easily on the ear, but he is capable of real depth of expression, as in Orgonte's beautifully sung 'Se piangete, o luci belli'. Then there is the full orchestral texture: not just strings and continuo but also oboes, horns and trumpets,







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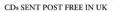
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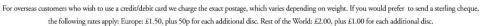
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with flutes lulling Sesostri to sleep and piccolos providing birdsong. And Terradellas has a good sense of dramatic timing, an aria sometimes breaking into the recitative with no orchestral introduction.

The plot is predictable – murdered king, usurping tyrant, vengeful widow, loyal nobleman, returning prince – but all the characters are given strong, well-shaped arias. Sunhae Im as the prince, shrill at first, soon finds her inner *coglioni*, and she is well partnered by Ditte Andersen as the lover. Alexandrina Pendatchanska rages impressively as the queen. As the villainous Amasi, Kenneth Tarver sounds uncomfortable with the tessitura, but Tom Randle makes a fine, heroic Fanete. Otero's direction of his forces is first-rate.

I wish I had space to quote some of the gibberish that passes for an English translation of the libretto. Never mind: the performance is the thing – unmissable.

Richard Lawrence

Turnage

Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House / Antonio Pappano

Stage director Richard Jones

Opus Arte 🕑 🕿 OA1054D (120' • NTSC • 16:9 •

LPCM stereo & DTS 5.1 • 0 • s)
Recorded live, February 23 & 26, 2011



The ROH production of Turnage's Anna Nicole is now on DVD

It seems fitting that Mark-Anthony Turnage's Anna Nicole should reach a wider audience through this vividly filmed DVD. Like Anna Nicole herself, who lived out her life in the media, this is an opera that demands to be seen in its full wide-screen glory. From fame and fortune as a DD-bust-sized model to an early death from a drugs overdose, Anna Nicole's story can be seen as a mirror-image of the American dream and Richard Jones's luridly coloured production plays up the nightmare image of lower-class vulgarity in the US for all it is worth.

On DVD, the opera is worryingly compelling. The more Turnage and his librettist, Richard Thomas, pile one cringemaking scene upon another, the harder it is to look away. Taken on its own, Thomas's in-your-face text is slick, and the satire flashes past (I recommend watching the DVD with the English subtitles on). Like Cole Porter, he is adept at list songs - most imaginatively in the list of drugs intoned by Anna Nicole's son after his death - but it is a fatal flaw that Thomas shuns the solo opportunities to explore character that opera needs. Turnage's score does him the favour of keeping out of the way where the words need to be heard and concentrates on building up a contemporary, urban, very sleazy atmosphere. The way Turnage takes Anna Nicole's solo 'You can pray, you can dream' and moulds it afresh into the Prelude to Act 2 is just one example of the music's incidental beauties.

Eva-Maria Westbroek is the game soprano who takes on the title-role, singing in excellent English and making the journey from glamour babe to fat-and-frumpy loser with admirable panache. But then the whole cast is excellent, from Gerald Finley's Lawyer Stern and Susan Bickley's feisty Mother to Alan Oke as the 89-year-old second husband, all bolstered by a vivid musical performance under Pappano. So why do the doubts refuse to go away? Primarily because the crucial disappointment is that Turnage and Thomas, between them, have failed to get beneath the surgically enhanced skin of Anna Nicole to suggest what the real woman might have been like underneath. As it stands, the opera is a salacious exposé and not much more - a compelling one none the less.

Richard Fairman

Verdi

Mario Carlin ten.....Bardolph

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra / Vittorio Gui Glyndebourne (†) ② GFOCD012-60 (122' • ADD) Recorded live. June 1960

Marco Stefanoni bass.....



A fine remastering of Gui's Falstaff for Glyndebourne

Recent issues have helped to augment the number of opera recordings left by Vittorio Gui (1885-1975), a still underestimated conductor who succeeded Fritz Busch to the music directorship of Glyndebourne. Aside from the long-term catalogue classics *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (with Victoria de los



HOTOGRAPHY: B

Angeles, Sesto Bruscantini and Luigi Alva) and Figaro (with Bruscantini and Sena Jurinac), these now include the live Pelléas and Puritani on Glyndebourne's own label, EMI's Comte Ory and Cenerentola (studio transfers of Glyndebourne productions), Ballo and an earlier Falstaff (unofficial recordings from BBC broadcasts) in addition to a wideranging host of performances from Italy: Agnese di Hohenstaufen, Aida, Battaglia di Legnano, Bohème, Fidelio, Fliegende Holländer, Freischütz, a Callas Medea and Parsifal Act 2, Nabucco and Oberon.

Gui's skills in earlier-19th-century scores suit him well to the pace and contrasts of Falstaff. Aided by the instrumental solo work of Beecham's RPO, he returns to the score a lightness sometimes overpowered by post-Toscanini conductors, keen with their modern instrumental weight to show off scoring whose detail and virtuosity parallels and anticipates the new wave of verismo. Glyndebourne's remastering is clear and the sound, if boxy next to more modern treatments, is certainly evocative of the house's small, original auditorium. Gui goes more for beauty and nostalgia than Toscanini (at least in his latter RCA set, whose drive is accentuated by the harsh recording) and his final scene in Windsor Great Park has an appropriately impressionist shimmer.

Geraint Evans sang his first Falstaff for this Glyndebourne production in 1957 (available from Gala) and went on to record it in the studio for Solti in 1963. The voice here is fresher than on that RCA/Decca Rome taping and, although well into the role by 1960, the Welshman is less manneredly comic than he became, the laughs are less anticipated and less played to the gallery (hear the Act 3 reprise of 'Reverenza' for an example of overplaying). But it would be mean to carp at



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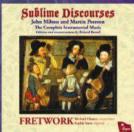
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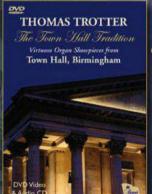
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a considerable assumption; certainly the setpieces here are sung with an expressive class to match (and to contrast intriguingly with) Gobbi's contemporary reading for Karajan (EMI, 3/57^R). There are similarly earlier, fresher glimpses of other stars of the opera's mid-20th-century performances: Ligabue's Alice (also on disc chez Solti and Bernstein), Dominguez's Quickly and Cuénod's Dr Caius. The young lovers (Adani, Oncina) are effective rather than stunning.

Overall here is not just a reminder of Gui's and Evans's achievements but a genuine contribution to the Falstaff discography – a relaxed, genial reading more in the mode of the conductor's compatriots Giulini and Abbado than the tauter, more neurotic drama unleashed under Solti or Toscanini. The latter's pre-war VPO recording - available most easily now as a download - remains an obligatory purchase.

Mike Ashman

Vivaldi

Farnace	
Max Emanuel Cencic counterten	Farnace
Ruxandra Donose mez	Tamiri
Mary Ellen Nesi mez	Selinda
Karina Gauvin sop	Gilade
Daniel Behle ten	Pompeo
Emiliano Gonzalez Toro ten	Aquilio

Radio Svizzera Choir, Lugano; I Barocchisti / Diego Fasolis

Virgin Classics (F) (3) 070914-2 (3h 12' • DDD • S/T/t)



This Ferrara version of Farnace includes a reconstructed Act 3

Lucchini's libretto Farnace was first set to music for Rome in 1724 by Vinci but over the next 14 years Vivaldi composed, performed or at least attempted six different versions of it (and may have also been involved with a pasticcio version at Florence in 1725). His original setting was premiered during the 1727 Venice Carnival but the music only survives in two manuscripts that respectively contain his different revised versions for Pavia (1731) and Ferrara (1738). The Ferrara production was cursed by misfortune and intrigues, partly because the Papal governor of Ferrara disapproved of the Red Priest's notorious disinclination to perform ecclesiastical duties and the allegations surrounding his relationship with his 'nurse' Anna Girò; the venture was cancelled and Vivaldi retreated to Venice, probably abandoning work on the extensively rewritten score (the 1738 manuscript contains only Acts 1 and 2; no libretto was ever printed).

This complicated history is written about with incomparable elegance by Frédéric Delaméa, who has also collaborated with Diego Fasolis in preparing a performing

edition of the Ferrara version, including a diligently 'reconstructed' Act 3.

Fasolis's performance is more convincing than Jordi Savall's erratic 2001 live recording of the Pavia version (reissued two years ago as part of Naïve's Vivaldi Edition). I Barocchisti's playing flows freely between energy and eloquence, and Fasolis ensures a perfect match of stylishness and imagination in the diverse aria accompaniments (even if the use of a choir instead of soloists for the few choruses seems anachronistic). Max Emanuel Cencic is on fine form as the king of Pontus, under attack from the Roman army of Pompey; the countertenor's brilliant coloratura is never merely showy, his poetic lament singing is superb ('Perdono, o figlio amato'), and his knack for portraying explosive vengefulness does not preclude intelligent musicality ('Gemo in un punto e fremo'). Selinda's 'Al vezzeggiar d'un volto' is beautifully hushed by Ann Hallenberg (Vivaldi cut this from the Ferrara version but Delaméa and Fasolis wisely restore it). Karina Gauvin flawlessly emulates a virtuoso nightingale ('Quell'usignolo che innamorato') and gorgeously conveys a murmuring breeze ('Scherza l'aura lusinghiera'). Mary Ellen Nesi relishes the stormy implacability of Berenice (Farnace's mother-in-law from hell who has joined the Romans); the conflict with her defiant daughter Tamiri and the noble Pompeo reaches a magnificent climax in two fantastic arias at the end of Act 1: Tamiri's heroic trumpet aria 'Or di Roma forti eroi' is sung with plenty of spark by Romanian mezzo-soprano Ruxandra Donose, and Pompeo's valorous soliloquy 'Non trema senza stella' has two concertante oboes juxtaposed with turbulent strings. Aquilio's bold 'Alle minacce di fiera belva' (featuring a thrilling pair of horns) is sung with an admirable balance of brawn and polish by Emiliano Gonzalez Toro.

The plot and characterisations sizzle while there is irreconcilable conflict, and, even if the ensuing lieto fine is spectacularly implausible, this marvellous recording reveals that Vivaldi's theatrical fantasy is a journey worth taking. David Vickers

Selected comparison: Savall (10/02^R) (NAIV) OP30471

Naïve (F) (3) OP30513 (158' • DDD)

Vivaldi

Teuzzone	
Paolo Lopez counterten	Teuzzone
Raffaella Milanesi mez	Zidiana
Delphine Galou contr	Zelinda
Roberta Mameli sop	Cino
Furio Zanasi bar	Sivenio
Antonio Giovannini counterten	Egaro
Makoto Sakurada ten	Troncone, Argonte
Le Concert des Nations / Jordi Sav	/all



The latest chapter in Naïve's ambitious Vivaldi Edition

Between 1718 and 1720 Vivaldi worked in Mantua, where he was appointed maestro di cappella da camera to the Habsburg governor Prince Philip of Hessen-Darmstadt. On Christmas Day 1718 the prince announced his forthcoming marriage to the Princess Eleanora of Guastalla, and the next day the (premature) prenuptial celebrations included the premiere of Vivaldi's Teuzzone. Frédéric Delaméa's essay compares Teuzzone to Turandot because of its Chinese setting, but the dissimilar plot concerns the valiant title-hero's quest to reclaim his rightful throne from the usurper Zidiana.

Apostolo Zeno's libretto was already a dozen years old when Vivaldi set it for Mantua, and it is possible that a few arias were taken from previous settings by other composers, but Delaméa insists that Teuzzone 'constitutes an authentically Vivaldian product' and praises it as a 'richly fascinating work, illustrating in all its plenitude the operatic language of its composer's first creative period'.

Jordi Savall's performance was recorded last June at the Opéra Royal in Versailles. Le Concert des Nations play with plenty of flair. Even if guitar strumming can be intrusive, gentler music, such as the emperor Troncone's dignified death in the opening scene, is performed sweetly. Raffaella Milanesi's seductive singing of Zidiana's 'Tu mio vezzoso' gets an affectionate accompaniment (including intricate concertino strings) that Savall swings flirtatiously; the first act concludes with delicately played muted strings in Zelinda's 'Ti sento, sì ti sento'. As the title-hero, 'sopranista' Paolo Lopez is less screechy and histrionic than the worst soprano-range countertenors I've encountered but sometimes in slow music his timbre can seem anaemic. However, he unerringly navigates Vivaldi's fiendish vocal passages in 'Come fra turbini' (Teuzzone's bold sedition on hearing that he has been cheated of the crown), his heroic coloratura in the cavatina 'Di trombe guerriere' opens Act 2 with a bang (thanks also to brilliant oboes and splendid trumpets), his angry 'Sì, ribelle anderò, morirò' is a thrilling reaction to a trumped-up trial, and the hero also has a vividly doleful prison scene ('Antri cupi, infausti orrori'). At the beginning of Act 3 Vivaldi portrays the minister Cino's uneasy guilt at his treason in a simple continuo arioso ('Quanto costi, al mio riposo', sung flawlessly by soprano Roberta Mameli). In stark musical contrast, Teuzzone's lover, Zelinda, urges Cino to repent his part in the coup in her spectacular trumpet aria 'Con palme ed allori' (performed valorously by Delphine Galou).

This accomplished recording is another distinguished chapter in Naïve's epic Vivaldi Edition. David Vickers

Books



Peter Quantrill reviews Jens Malte Fischer's Mahler biography

'As might be expected from a theatrical man, Jens Malte Fischer hasn't written a musical biography'



David Fanning reviews a survey of Shostakovich's string quartets

'The stress placed from the outset on the contradictions in Shostakovich's life and personality is perfectly targeted'

Gustav Mahler

By Jens Malte Fischer. Translated by Stewart Spencer Yale University Press, PB, 740pp, £29.99 ISBN 978-0-300-13444-5



Jens Malte Fischer has published studies of Wagner, Karl Kraus, some noted film directors and

singers, and, as might be expected from a theatrical man, he hasn't written a musical biography. Bach, the *Symphonie fantastique*, the *Pathétique*, of vital and lasting influence on Mahler's music, pass under the radar. While Hans Rott's symphony is 'impossible to ignore' in Mahler's development, Fischer says, the idea that it provided a model for Mahler's music is 'without foundation'. In fact Mahler was still lifting ideas from Rott's symphony in his own Seventh, probably unawares, so thoroughly had Rott's voice been absorbed by his own.

So, leaving aside the chapters on the music, which reliably summon the malevolent ghost of Theodor Adorno to buttress highly personal reactions to music that's already far more fiercely treated with heat than light, we have a cultural biography of impressive scope. Mahler the reluctant Jew and Christian, the born conductor and composer don't take shape, while Mahler the stocky athlete, nervous workaholic, teetotal hypochondriac, moralising hypocrite, avid reader, inspired impresario and uxorious husband, certainly do. Would he have 'done better' to marry the singer Selma Kurz? I don't really care, though we wouldn't now have the Tenth (not that Fischer, following Adorno, thinks we have a Tenth beyond its first movement) - and Alma emerges from the book as hardly less of a monster than Gustav himself, albeit one whose behaviour is shaped by low cunning more than forgotten moral philosophy. I like the story (not told by Fischer) of the schoolteacher who approached Mahler, director of the Vienna Court Opera, wanting to take his young charges to some Wagner; which Mahler promptly forbade as injurious to young minds - and recommended Mozart instead. Perhaps such anecdotes are no less

ephemeral than the composer's hut at Toblach, now home to chickens in a petting zoo. There is, after all, no shortage of commentators in these irony-filled times who pronounce that the Eighth is a monument only to an ego – Fischer stops just short of saying the same.

The translation, honestly done, shows little enthusiasm for the work, retaining many repetitions, contradictions and a clumsy pedantry about Fischer's prose. Too bad the pedantry didn't extend to fact-checking. Before its first publication in German eight years ago, did no one spot the claim that the Sixth includes Mahler's first exposition repeat (or the omission of any reference to the exposition repeat in the chapter on the First)? Since 2003, solid evidence has made a nonsense of Fischer's flat declaration that Scherzo-Andante is the 'definitive' order of the middle movements. Such solecisms do not inspire confidence in the rest of the text that isn't already littered with suppositions: 'there seems little doubt that Mahler would have' thought such and such (agreed with Adorno, or Mozart). Thanks to Henri-Louis de la Grange, Donald Mitchell and Gilbert Kaplan, we already know a lot (more than enough?) about what Mahler thought, best of all through his music and those tantalising piano rolls, without the need for further speculation. To be reassured that one of the fine old university presses can still publish an authoritative life of a musician who was so much more than a composer, read Raymond Holden's Richard Strauss. For a single volume on Mahler, try Franklin (CUP) or Carr (Constable). Peter Quantrill

Music for Silenced Voices

Shostakovich and his Fifteen Quartets By Wendy Lesser Yale University Press, PB, 368pp, £18.99



ISBN 978-0-300-16933-1

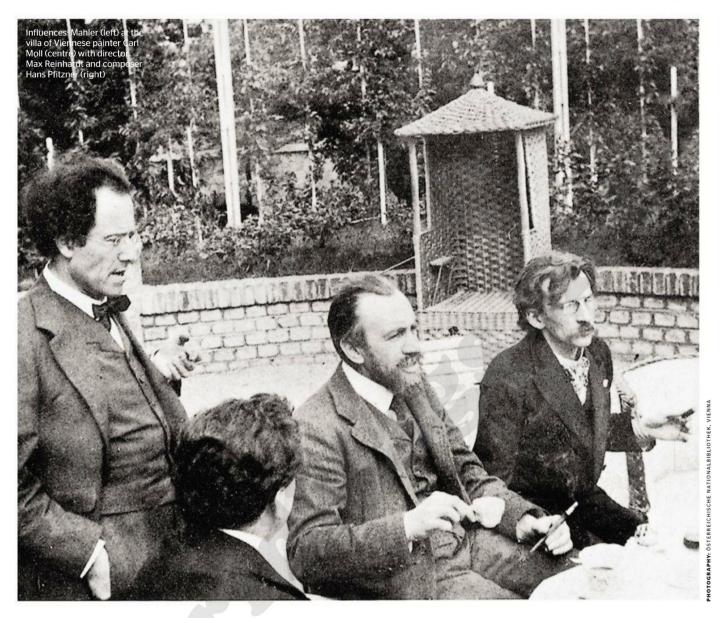
Though performers have long since repaired the neglect of Shostakovich's 15 string quartets

in the concert hall and on record, the

scholarly world has been slower off the mark. In the past 10 years there have admittedly been three specialist studies. But Wendy Lesser's volume is the first in English to take on all 15 quartets in one fell swoop, and at the same time she fills the gap for a more descriptive approach aimed primarily at the non-musicological reader.

That approach comes courtesy of a literary critic, non-fiction author, novelist and editor, who combines passion for the music with a refined intellectual sensibility and a beautifully flowing style. Lesser has pertinent points of reference at her disposal that few musicologists command, and these enrich both her thoughts on the quartets themselves and especially the more discursive outer chapters, styled 'Elegy' and 'Epilogue'. (She has rather cutely organised her six chapters according to the movement-titles of the Fifteenth Quartet, which occasionally makes for a curious fit with the works discussed, but is one way at least of showing how that final, bleak, masterpiece relates to the complete cycle.)

Those general musings are at least as valuable as the central commentaries, arguably more so. The stress placed from the outset on the contradictions in Shostakovich's life and personality is perfectly targeted, and it sets up an examination of the relationship between life and works - also between Shostakovich's output as a whole and individual quartets - that would otherwise be even more hazardous than the author recognises it to be. In the process Lesser apportions respect to other authors where it is due, and sharp criticism where it is not (Testimony is surely a horse so long dead it does not need yet another flogging). Her summaries of individual works are productively informed by her grasp of ambiguities; the Sixth Quartet as an instance of 'guilt-ridden happiness and doubtful hope' is one among many felicitous examples. And if the amount of speculative first-person writing occasionally becomes tiresome, much is redeemed in the final discourse on interpretation, drama and monologue, truth and irony, allusion, tone of voice, and silence, which constitutes some of the best general



writing about Shostakovich around. Wendy Lesser asserts that the 'Silenced Voices' commemorated in the quartets are of 'adventurous writers, artists, and musicians during the Stalin era...the lost voices of Shostakovich's operas...and the deathsilenced voices of his close friends'. That certainly covers a good part of the picture; or rather, perhaps, it reminds us of the frames within which the pictures are painted. Some of the connections between frame and picture drawn are less persuasive than others. For instance, the contention that the Second Quartet is really dedicated to the composer's great friend and intellectual super-ego Sollertinsky (where the ostensible dedication is to his composer-colleague Shebalin) feels more than a little forced. But on the whole, Lesser's personal reactions are skilfully balanced against the views of the 20 or more acquaintances of the composer, performers and scholars she has interviewed. As a result,

the background discourse on each piece contains much that is valuable and some observations that are even inspirational. One imagines a string quartet coach with an abundance of stimulating contextual remarks but who is generally happy to leave the nitty-gritty of execution to others.

This is in some ways a strange book to find under the Yale University Press imprint, since it has so few scholarly pretensions (no bibliography, no proper footnotes, no musical examples, no engagement with the non-English literature, very little mention of repertoire other than Shostakovich). The complete absence from the text of Sarah Reichardt's *Composing the Modern Subject* (Ashgate: 2008, on Quartets Nos 6-9) is a sad missed opportunity, since the cultural theory underpinning that study overlaps interestingly with Lesser's concerns. It is also frustrating that so many points of information are hard—if not impossible—to pin down, and one

dreads the prospect of students and programme-note writers seizing on them as fact. For instance, in the preamble to her discussion of the Fifth Quartet, Lesser has Galina Ustvolskaya down as Shostakovich's 'lover' (with later reference to their 'dalliance'). Presuming the words to mean the same in American as in UK English, one looks for the source of this information, which is certainly not to be found in at least three recent book-length studies of Ustvolskaya. But there is none. The claim may or may not be true but, for a book styled in the blurb as 'rigorously faithful to the known facts in this notoriously complicated life', one expects chapter and verse.

All the same, this is a study that has much to offer to all who know and love Shostakovich's quartets, and there should be few performers, critics or musicologists who would read it without profit.

David Fanning

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REPLAY

Rob Cowan's monthly survey of reissues and archive recordings

Off-air radio broadcast gems

Mahler in Israel • Toscanini in Venice • Reiner's Verdi Requiem • Stokowski in 20th-century symphonies

adio broadcast recordings from around the globe have always been Replay regulars, although I don't recall having previously received any material from the Israel Philharmonic's archives. Happily that omission has now been rectified by Helicon Classics, whose initial batch of three IPO radio recordings augurs well for the future. It was a bold move by the orchestra to programme Mahler's Sixth Symphony in 1963, especially when you consider that the Mahler boom was only just beginning, and that the likes of Leinsdorf, Bernstein, Kubelík, Barbirolli, Solti and Abbado had yet to commit their own interpretations of the work to disc. For the occasion Antal Dorati was true to his form at the time: an honest, no-nonsense interpreter, very dramatic and favouring generally fast tempi though offering welcome reserves of heart in the lovely slow movement. Another 'Living Presence' mainstay, Paul Paray, visited the Tel Aviv Mann Auditorium in the 1970s to conduct Schumann and although the CD claims that both the Second and Third Symphonies are mono recordings, the Second is, in fact, taken from a reasonably good stereo tape. Both performances are conceptually quite similar to Paray's Detroit Symphony Schumann symphony recordings from the 1950s (Mercury), although the playing is less tightly sprung and a little warmer in tonal profile. Pierre Monteux's Beethoven Fourth from 1964 is very impressive, the finely tensed Adagio opening being an obvious highlight; and the same concert includes typically big-hearted, unmannered accounts of Elgar's Enigma Variations and Ravel's Second Daphnis and Chloé Suite. All three CDs reproduce well preserved mastertapes. I do hope that further instalments of the series will be forthcoming.

Other interesting 'off-air' recordings have arrived from the enterprising Archipel label. **Arturo Toscanini** conducting the Orchestra of La Scala, Milan, at Venice's ill-fated La Fenice in September 1949 is very special and although Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony is missing its first few bars, the performance is characteristically lithe and expressive.

Cherubini's Anacréon Overture and Smetana's Vltava are exceptional by any standards (in my view more memorable interpretatively than Toscanini's far better-recorded alternative with the NBC Symphony Orchestra) and there are compelling versions of Strauss's Don Juan and Wagner's Die Meistersinger Overture, which justifiably brings the house down. Also included are two recordings from the Lucerne Festival in 1946, again with the La Scala Orchestra: a broad and powerful Egmont Overture and a thrilling account of the Overture and Bacchanale from Wagner's Tannhäuser which at around 14'48" briefly suffers some sort of interference. The sound throughout is little more than passable but the performances are vintage Toscanini, even given some less-thanpristine playing.

When I first set eyes on Archipel's transfer of Fritz Reiner conducting Verdi's Requiem in 1958 I thought, 'Ah yes, the Decca recording,' until I remembered that Decca's 1959 stereo production features the Vienna Philharmonic with soloists Price, Björling, Elias, Tozzi, whereas Archipel's live mono recording hails from Chicago (the CSO, naturally) with Rysanek, Resnik, Lloyd and, again, Tozzi. Needless to say the live version piles on the tension, as you can hear for yourself by comparing the two versions of the 'Libera me' section. There are bonuses, too: music from Wagner's Tristan and Parsifal (1958), and Haydn's Symphony No 103 (1957), all recorded live in Chicago. The performances, all superbly played, subscribe to that familiar Reiner synthesis of drama and refinement and the transfers sound well.

One of the loveliest of 20th-century American symphonies is **Howard Hanson**'s Fourth (*Requiem*), which the composer himself recorded for Mercury in 1953 with the Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra and which Pristine Audio have just reissued along with Hanson's Songs from (Walt Whitman's) *Drum Taps*, with baritone David Meyers, and works by Loeffler and Randall Thompson. Hanson's Fourth also turns up on an enterprising and musically rewarding Guild

double-pack devoted to broadcast recordings of 20th-century symphonies conducted by Leopold Stokowski. The Hanson was recorded in January 1944 with the NBC Symphony, the red-blooded string playing being a particularly striking attribute. Other NBC broadcasts on the set are of Stravinsky's Symphony in C (1943, interesting but to my ears conceptually flawed) and Hindemith's Symphony in E flat, which makes a very strong impression. Alan Hovhaness's attractive Third Symphony employs the same orchestra in its postdisbandment incarnation as the Symphony of the Air. The other two works are Roy Harris's typically sand-swept Seventh (first version), a 1955 recording with the St Louis Symphony, and a recording from the same year with the Cologne WDR Symphony Orchestra of Karl Amadeus Hartmann's harrowing Second Symphony (subtitled Adagio) which, although subject to one or two falls from technical perfection, conveys the troubled soul of this extremely powerful work. The Stokowski expert Edward Johnson tells me that Hartmann himself was 'bowled over' by the performance, and little wonder. All the recordings have transferred well to CD.

THE RECORDINGS



Mahler Dorati Helicon M HEL29642



Schumann Paray Helicon M HEL29640



Beethoven. Elgar. Ravel Monteux Helicon M HEL29641



Beethoven. Cherubini, etc Toscanini Archipel © ② ARPCDO563



Haydn. Verdi. Wagner Reiner Archipel (\$\sqrt{2}\) ARPCD0521 (\$\sqrt{9}\)

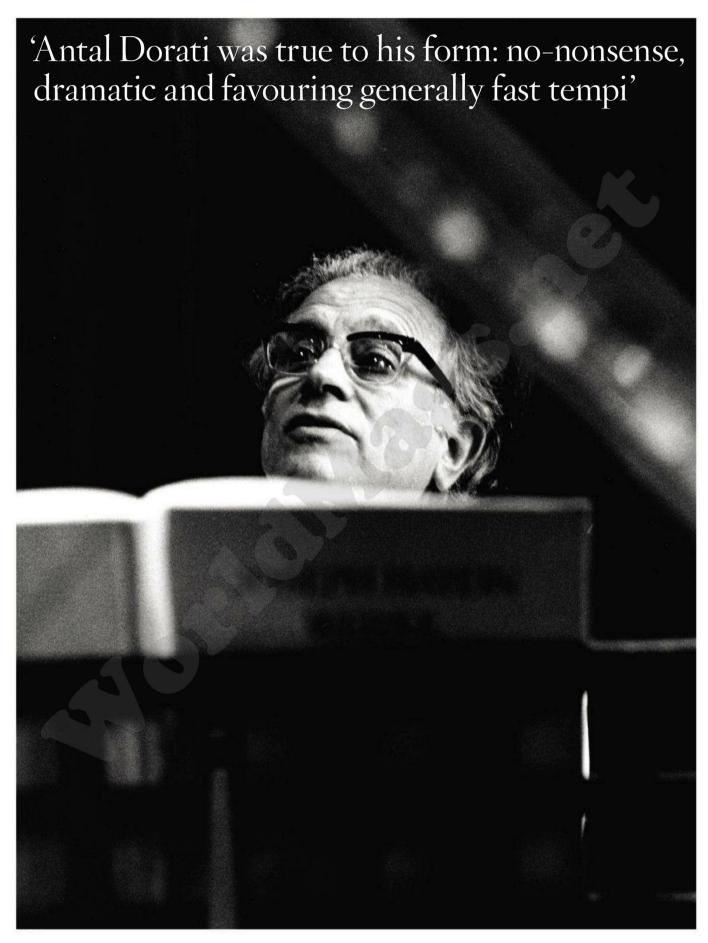


Hanson, etc Hanson Pristine Audio ® PASC292



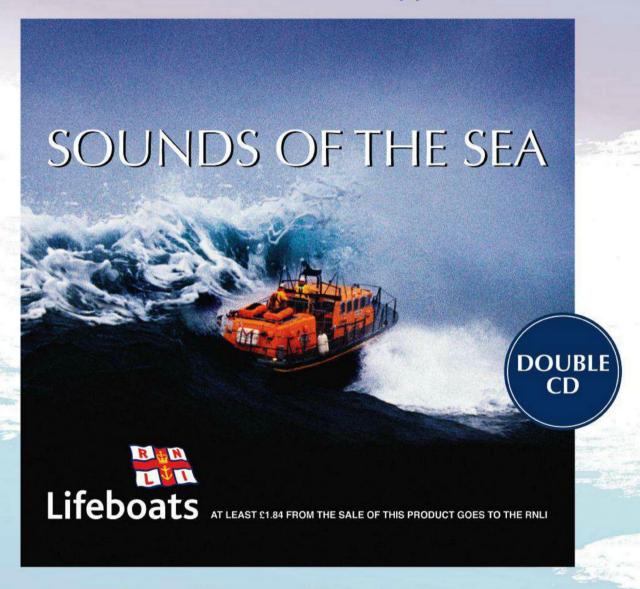
Hanson. Hartmann. Stravinsky. Hindemith, etc Stokowski Guild M GHCD2379/80

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hey call him America's greatest native-born violinist and, indeed, Albert Spalding's tone was as richly expressive as any, even by 1951 when he recorded the three Brahms Violin Sonatas with pianist-composer Ernö Dohnanyi. These gripping renditions couldn't be further removed from the sanitised norm we so often hear nowadays. Rather, they reveal a pooled creative impulse, sounding totally improvised, and while neither is what you'd call super-slick, musicality burns from virtually every note. It's a cliché but I'll say it anyway: these are real performances. And Mark Obert-Thorn's expert transfers are well mastered by Pristine Audio.

Naxos reveals the full impact of Obert-Thorn's equally fine latest volume in the label's **Jascha Heifetz** series. Indeed, for me the achievement here is even greater – it restores the full tonal bloom to Heifetz's fabulous 1954 Hollywood recording of Spohr's Eighth Concerto (a work that Spalding also recorded), an RCA classic that BMG rather dulled in their serviceable but less-than-focused in-house

transfers. Obert-Thorn returns Heifetz to the tight, 'true mono' close-set sound frame that captured the violinist's speaking tone with such uncanny accuracy, and the emotional impact of this Concerto 'Song Scene' (as Spohr called it) approximates Callas singing some great aria. Naxos could easily have labelled this particular CD 'The Greatest Jascha Heifetz Album Ever'.

We're also given two Bruch concertos, the First in the 1951 Abbey Road recording with Sargent, the Second - another Heifetz classic - again from Hollywood in 1954, under Izler Solomon. Add the two Beethoven Romances (1951, Hollywood, William Steinberg) and you have a matchless showcase of Heifetz's unique blend of warmth and brilliance. Naxos have also released a first volume of Heifetz 'Miniatures', principally the American Decca recordings from the mid-1940s and a couple of rare V-discs: Bygone Memories by Cyril Scott and Benjamin's Jamaican Rumba. David Lennox's versions are serviceable though some tracks admit an unwelcome ambience. But playing is characteristically vibrant.

The French violinist **Henry Merckel** was for many years a seductive presence with the Paris Opéra Orchestra. Dutton's Merckel programme, recorded in 1935 and the early 1940s, reveals a personality that combines agility and sweetness in music by Jean Hubeau, Marcel Delannoy and Saint-Saëns (a superb version of his Third Violin Concerto), all showcasing a tonal profile that, as transferred to CD by Mike Dutton, comes across with uncanny presence.

THE RECORDINGS



Brahms Spalding, Dóhnanyi Pristine Audio ® PACMO78



Bruch. Beethoven. Spohr Heifetz Naxos (\$\sigma\$ 8 111371



'Miniatures' Heifetz Naxos (\$) 8 111379



Delannoy. Hubeau. Saint-Saëns

Merckel

Dutton © CDBP9805

A vintage quartet to reckon with

A chance to relive a unique, spontaneous concert moment; and four decades of the London String Quartet

t last it's arrived! Some while ago I wrote about an electrifying account of Smetana's Má vlast given live at the Prague National Theatre on June 5, 1939, by an augmented Czech Philharmonic under Václav Talich, roughly three months after the Nazis entered Prague. As I wrote then: 'Each tone-poem is tailed by wild applause and, at the end of Blanik, the massed shouts of approval suddenly transform to nationalist fervour as the audience spontaneously bursts in with the National Anthem, one of the most moving concert moments ever to be captured on disc.' The CD edition I was referring to was put out by the Czech Philharmonic itself but, although the original source is scarred by the odd bump or click, Supraphon's transfer is clearer and has a more tangible edge. Dvořák's Op 72 Slavonic Dances, again from the Prague National Theatre under Talich's inspired direction, are just as exciting.

Another revelatory set arrives from Music & Arts whose skilfully refurbished centenary collection devoted to the **London String**

Quartet, or 'LSQ' as they were affectionately known (according to Tully Potter's exhaustive notes) gave me considerable pleasure. Prior to hearing these warm, insightful performances, I'd encountered only a 1917 LSQ acoustic recording of Vaughan Williams's song-cycle On Wenlock Edge with tenor Gervase Elwes, a precious document that also turns up here in exceptionally good sound: the voice itself has an unexpected degree of presence. The various changes in personnel are authoritatively documented by Potter but what begs to be commented on is the overall excellence of the playing, especially the 1943 performances that were taken down 'live' in 1943 at the Washington Library of Congress. Beethoven's Op 59 No 3, Brahms's Op 67 and Debussy's Op 10 all receive exemplary performances, with viola player William Primrose captured at the very height of his powers. Also included are Beethoven's Opp 95 and 132, and quartets by Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Ravel, Dohnányi and Toch, and significant early recordings of music by Elgar (an abridged

version of the String Quartet recorded in 1921), Frank Bridge and Fritz Kreisler. One of my favourites is a 1928 recording of César Franck's much-underrated String Quartet in D and there's a heart-warming sequence of eight Stephen Foster songs recorded in Los Angeles in 1946. The Quartet's deeply expressive playing style was, by then, on a par with what could by heard from various front-ranking American ensembles of the day. I was happy to acquaint myself with Sir John Blackwood McEwen's attractive Sixth Quartet and Bloch's Five Pieces from 1923-25. The sound quality is mostly excellent and if you've an ear for vintage quartet playing and probing musicianship then be sure to acquire this wonderful set. @

THE RECORDINGS



Dvořák. Smetana Talich Supraphon ® ② SU4065-2



London String Quartet 1917-1951 recordings

1917-1951 recordings Music & Arts **® 4** CD1253

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However, the sheer multitude of French composers and the huge number and variety of works they set down mean that even now many worthwhile French operas have been unable to elbow their way into the theatre. But that doesn't mean you have no opportunity to hear such riches.

The following recordings should offer you a sound start as you begin to build your own collection of opéras français. Some of the most rare and desirable recordings of the past that appeared on major labels - especially of the 19th- and 20th-century repertoire - are now most likely to be offered as downloads. We've highlighted them on these pages and remind collectors always to be alert to the opportunities offered by the download market.

The boundless riches of the French operatic repertoire await. Enjoy!



o Charpentier: La descente d'Orphée aux enfers

Erato (F) 0630 11913-2 (5/96)

Not a major work, perhaps, but

this re-telling of the Orpheus myth is a welcome Baroque-era discovery. It has some fine music and makes light work of a familiar story, dispensing charm and a gentle expressiveness across the pastoral landscape. William Christie's Les Arts Florissants make this chamber opera their own and are ideal guides on this underworld journey.

Sophie Daneman, Paul Agnew: Les Arts Florissants / William Christie

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Thomas: La cour de Célimène

Opera Rara (F) (2) ORC37 (8/98) A survey of rare operas wouldn't be complete without Opera Rara.

For those familiar with Thomas's Hamlet and Mignon, his reworkings of Shakespeare and Goethe, the earlier opéra comique La cour de Célimène is a real tonic. Well-crafted music brings affection and wit to amorous misunderstandings and Opera Rara's presentation - well-cast singers and a lavish booklet - lives up to its usual de luxe standard.

Laura Claycomb, Joan Rodgers, Alastair Miles; Philharmonia Orchestra / Andrew Litton



© Chabrier: L'étoile

EMI (B) (2) 358688-2 (6/85^R)

After once seeing it live, who could fail to fall in love with L'étoile? Both sophisticated and naive, this opéra

bouffe is so different from the imposing Gwendoline or wayward Le roi malgré lui. The music bubbles insouciantly and is arguably Chabrier's finest operatic achievement. This recording stems from a production at Lyons that transferred soon afterwards to the Edinburgh Festival.

Colette Alliot-Lugaz, Georges Gautier, Gabriel Bacquier; Orchestra of the Opéra de Lyon / John Eliot Gardiner



Poulenc: Les mamelles de Tirésias

Naxos → 9 80853 (2/55^R) The zany side of French opera reaches its zenith in Poulenc's

surreal comedy. Why is it so rarely seen today? Perhaps it's the awkward length; but whatever the reason, Poulenc's wildly inventive music does not deserve such neglect. A recent CD is available from Brilliant Classics but it is worth searching out this original 1954 recording with Denise Duval, a model of period French style. Available as a download.

Denise Duval, Jean Giraudeau; Paris Opéra-Comique Orchestra / André Cluytens



💿 Bizet: Djamileh

Orfeo (F) C174 881A (4/89) Composed just two years before Carmen, Djamileh is a potent example of Bizet's mastery. This

one-act piece, admired by Mahler and Strauss, weaves its spell swiftly as Bizet transports his audience to the Orient so beloved of 19th-century French composers, where the sultry atmosphere reeks of the languor of sexual excess. Djamileh doesn't often appear in the theatre, so Gardelli's recording will have to satisfy us in the meantime.

Lucia Popp, Franco Bonisolli, Jean-Philippe Lafont; Munich Radio Orchestra / Lamberto Gardelli



Auber: Le domino noir

Decca → 440 646-2DH02 (1/96) When it was first released, this set was a high-water mark in modern

recordings of Auber. A brilliant cast brought grace and élan to the music and the same care they might invest in the finest Rossini. The infectious zest of Le domino noir should send first-time listeners out to discover more about French opera, and Auber in particular, in the first half of the 19th century. Download only.

Sumi Jo, Isabelle Vernet, Bruce Ford; English Chamber Orchestra / Richard Bonynge



Rameau: Les Boréades

Opus Arte (F) OA0899D (8/04) Rameau must figure in any round-up of French opera and his last tragédie en musique, unperformed at the

time of his death, is as rewarding as any. It's rich in invention and musically thrilling. John Eliot Gardiner revived it in the '70s and collectors can choose between his version and this chic DVD production (which has some risible choreography).

Barbara Bonney, Paul Agnew, Toby Spence, Laurent Naouri; Les Arts Florissants / William Christie, dir Robert Carsen



👽 Saint-Saëns: Henry VIII

Cascavelle (F) W VELD7004 Stars as diverse as Montserrat Caballé and Boris Christoff have been

attracted to Saint-Saëns's romantic opera. Forget the history and you have a skilful piece giving Henry VIII's break with Rome the grand opera treatment and nostalgic echoes of Tudor music. Cascavelle's DVD, one of its series from Compiègne, has solid musical and dramatic values. Michèle Command, Alain Gabriel, Philippe Rouillon; Orchestre Lyrique Français /



6 Grétry: L'amant jaloux

Alain Guignal, dir Pierre Jourdan

Wahoo (F) DVD001 (4/11) While Mozart and da Ponte were exploring opera's comic heights,

Grétry was delighting French audiences with his own Gallic brand of classical wit. This piece aspires to near-Mozartian comic elegance and the DVD returns it to Versailles, the scene of its premiere, where it is performed with period grace and a joie de vivre that should win Grétry new friends.

Magali Léger, Claire Debono, Brad Cooper; Le Cercle de l'Harmonie / Jérémie Rhorer. dir Pierre-Emmanuel Rousseau

Massenet: Esclarmonde



Decca (S) (3) 478 3049 DM3 (11/76^R)

Esclarmonde enjoyed a brief period in the spotlight in the 1970s, when Joan Sutherland brought the opera back from oblivion. The spectacular solo when Esclarmonde invokes the spirits of air, sea and fire became a regular party-piece but there is more to Massenet's most Wagnerian score, including a love duet as ecstatic as any in the Romantic repertoire. Now that Bonynge's recording has been reissued, no one who loves French opera at its most gloriously luxuriant need hold back.

Joan Sutherland, Hugette Tourangeau, Giacomo Aragall; National Philharmonic Orchestra / Richard Bonynge





Thomas: Le songe d'une nuit d'été

Cascavelle (F) W VELD7002 This DVD features some attractively light music but otherwise this is a silly Tudor romp.

Ghyslaine Raphanel, Alain Gabriel. Jean-Philippe Courtis; Kraków Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra / Michel Swierczewski. dir Pierre Jourdan



Visit the Gramophone Player at gramophone.co.uk to hear an excerpt from Andrew Litton's recording of Thomas's La cour de Célimène

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subject of next issue's

specialist, Jed Distler.



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THE GRAMOPHONE COLLECTION

From Liszt, an organ masterpiece

With 'Ad nos', Liszt - whose bicentenary is celebrated this year - redefined the organ's identity. **Jeremy Nicholas** seeks a recording that does it full justice

ranz Liszt arrived in Weimar in 1848 having decided to abandon life as a touring virtuoso and devote himself to composing. More than a century earlier, JS Bach had composed many of his greatest works there. As court organist, he had played the instrument in the Stadtkirche, still intact when Liszt made his home in the city.

To Liszt, Weimar seemed suffused with the spirit of Bach, a feeling that impelled him to complete a project he had begun back in 1841: the transcriptions for solo piano of six of Bach's organ Preludes and Fugues (BWV543-548). His interest in the organ was further awakened by the presence in Weimar of two outstanding young organists, Alexander Gottschalg (1827-1908) and Alexander Winterberger (1834-1914), both pupils of Weimar's municipal organist Johann Töpfer, a noted teacher as well as being an organ builder. In this environment, it was almost inevitable that Liszt, ever the probing, questioning adventurer, should apply himself to writing some original compositions for the organ. The first fruit of his labours was one of the instrument's masterpieces, a work that stands as loftily in the organ's repertoire as the B minor Sonata does in the piano's: the Fantasy and Fugue on the chorale 'Ad nos, ad salutarem undam' from Meyerbeer's Le prophète for organ or pedal piano.

Meyerbeer's spectacular grand opera, based on historic events in 16th-century Holland, had its premiere in Paris in 1849. It was a massive success, though the libretto by Scribe was described by one commentator as 'astonishingly weak and uninteresting'. Liszt used the opera's themes for his three *Illustrations du Prophète* for piano (S414).

He heard the opera again in Dresden in February 1850, and it was this occasion that inspired the Fantasy and Fugue. The theme comes from a gloomy prayer sung in Act 1 by the three Anabaptists, Jonas, Matthisen and Zacharias, who have turned up at Count Oberthal's castle near Dordrecht with the purpose of rousing the people to revolt against tyranny. They urge them to be re-baptised in the healing water: 'Ad nos, ad salutarem undam, iterum venite, miseri!' – which might be translated as, 'Come to us, oh unhappy people, come to the waves of salvation!'

Liszt changes Meyerbeer's 6/4 metre to 4/4 and, over three linked sections, works it into an immense structure of 756 bars lasting about 30 minutes. It calls on all the tonal and dynamic resources of the instrument, and for the highest technical accomplishment and colouristic imagination of the organist (Liszt left no guide to registrations save the Tromba at bars 141 and 150). Initially, the extended opening Fantasy uses just the first part of the theme. A fanfare figure follows, based on the second half of the chorale which is likewise developed with daring harmonies and virtuoso passages for hands and feet. The music subsides into a brief recitativo that introduces the serene Adagio in the opening measures of which we hear Liszt's version of the chorale in full for the first time. It is set in his favourite mystical key of F sharp major (far removed from the nominal C minor tonality of what has gone before). It's the same key, incidentally, as the 'slow movement', also prefaced by a recitativo, of the B minor Sonata composed two years after the Fantasy and Fugue. A series of diminished chords and pedal flourishes (allegro deciso) introduces the Fugue (allegretto

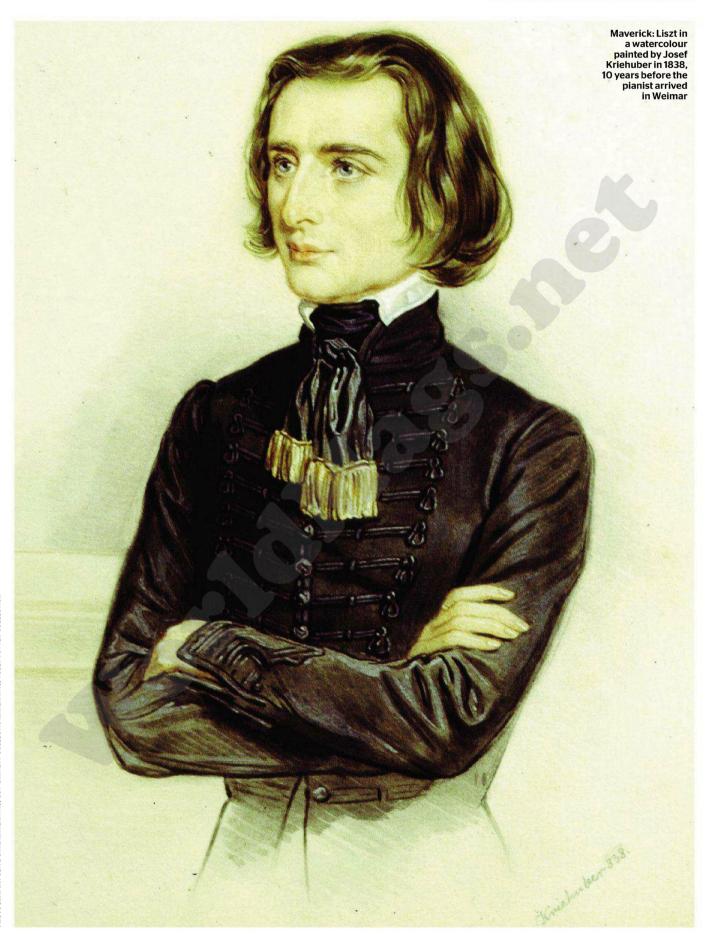
con moto). This gives way to the chorale played under a dazzling perpetuum mobile (vivace molto) for hands alone. The writing becomes increasingly fermented until the magisterial final statement of the chorale in C major on full organ.

With this single work, the organ was dragged out of the church and into the concert hall, a symphonic conception that vaunted both the structural proportions and avant-garde musical language of the mid-19th century. 'One of my least bad productions,' Liszt is reputed to have said of it.

'Ad nos' was completed by October 1850, dedicated to Meyerbeer and published in 1852, the same year in which it received its first performance. This was given by the 18-year-old Alexander Winterberger on the organ of Weimar's Stadtkirche. However, the work's subsequent success came only after its 'official' public debut in Liszt's (now standard) revised version which Winterberger introduced on September 26, 1855, in a gala concert to inaugurate the new four-manual organ of Merseburg Cathedral.

So – cathedral or concert hall? Cacophony or clarity? One doesn't necessarily preclude the other. Rather it depends on the recording engineer, and the organist's ability to articulate, phrase and register appropriately for the acoustic. To combine aural magnificence with a transparent realisation of Liszt's ingenious thematic transformation while simultaneously transporting the listener with a real performance is a difficult balance to achieve. For space reasons this survey cannot claim to be comprehensive, nor does it take into account Liszt's version for piano four-hands (S624), Marcel

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PHOTOGRAPHY: CLIVE BARDA/ARENAPAL, GUY GRAVETT COLLECTION/ARENAPAL, TULLY POTTER COLLECTION

Dupré's for organ and orchestra or Busoni's arrangement for solo piano.

There are two recordings of 'Ad nos' played on the Merseburg organ, one by **Thomas Trotter**, the other by **Michael Schönheit**. Merseburg has a big acoustic which, like many similar vaulted venues where 'Ad nos' has been recorded, does not favour textual lucidity. Trotter's marvellous articulation and far-ranging, ever-changing registration convey the music's might and splendour with more energy and clarity than Schönheit's sturdy, opaquely voiced account, well engineered though it is. Trotter's *Adagio* with a plaintive unda maris and flute is particularly piquant.

The earliest recording I have come across, though of the final section only, is by one of Trotter's predecessors as Birmingham City Organist, **GD Cunningham** (1878-1948). It was recorded in November 1928 at St Margaret's, Westminster (where Trotter also, coincidentally, is the current titulaire). Cunningham starts at the *Allegro deciso* section, 46 bars before the Fugue which is taken at a thrilling pace. Considering the difficulty of capturing the organ on shellac, it is remarkably clear and resonant for its age.

The first complete recording was made by **Jeanne Demessieux**, who died tragically young, aged 47, in 1968. Recorded in 1952 on the then new (1949) organ of the Victoria Hall, Geneva, hers is the fastest performance (26'10") – or would have been had not seven bars at the end of the *Adagio* (16'26") been repeated by a careless edit. Demessieux had a phenomenal technique and Liszt's frequently pianistic passagework is played with tremendous élan. Whether it was a wise decision to play the opening minims in the final statement of the chorale as crotchets / crotchet rests is a moot point.

Pierre Cochereau recorded 'Ad nos' for L'Oiseau-Lyre in 1955, the year he became

titular organist of Notre-Dame. Cavaillé-Coll's magnificent instrument (pre-electrification and subsequent restoration) offers a sumptuous sonic canvas. Cochereau gives the Adagio a wonderful otherworldly colouring, an effect spoilt, sadly, by horribly out-of-tune reeds from 16'59". Another glorious Cavaillé-Coll at Saint-Sernin in Toulouse is heard on Xavier Darasse's 1969 recording. There are some tuning and wind supply problems (no one had touched the instrument since its inception in 1888) but none that detract from this overwhelming performance. Liszt's almost constant thematic transformations are heard more clearly here than on any other recording, notably the pedal's contribution in the Fantasy, and the finale's vivace molto. Some may object to Darasse ignoring several of Liszt's dynamic and expression instructions (he pushes on through ritenutos and the link between the Adagio and the Allegro deciso is forte instead of piano) but it's a reading that carries you in its narrative sweep and panache.

The maverick **Jean Guillou**, on the other hand, is too wayward by half on the Marcussen organ of St Laurenskerk, Rotterdam (a live performance in 1980). After a ponderously slow start, way below *moderato*, idiosyncratic *rits and ralls* start to make the music episodic, and one golden rule when playing 'Ad nos' is to keep the tempo relationships between each section. His choice of registration draws attention to Guillou rather than to Liszt.

As every section and subsection of this mighty work passes, performances fall by the wayside until, as with someone on an army assault course, journey's end is finally reached without mishap. Martin Haselböck (1983, Grossen Saal of the Vienna Konzerthaus) belongs to the first category. Though well recorded, his fussy registrations change as frequently as his tempi in a performance that sounds as if the various sections have been

recorded a few pages at a time and assembled afterwards. The beginning of the *Adagio* (*pp*) is all but inaudible and I could do without the glockenspiel at 14'44". In the latter category is the Swedish organist **Hans Fagius** recorded in 1980 (by Robert von Bahr) on the luminous Åkerman & Lund organ, sadly destroyed by fire in 1990. It's an adrenalindriven performance and he is not the only organist to inject a slight but exciting *acclererando* leading up to the quasi-cadenza before the 12 bars of recitative and the *Adagio*.

Even more impressive is **Simon Preston** in 1984 at what was then 'his' organ – Westminster Abbey. Coupled with the 19th century's other great masterpiece for the instrument, the *Sonata on the 94th Psalm* by Liszt's pupil Julius Reubke, Preston's 'Ad nos' is superbly engineered: the Tromba's entrance, announcing the second part of the chorale, isn't merely another reed added to the mix. The chorale theme played on the pedals shortly after is the dominant voice for once, and, almost uniquely, you hear Liszt's *ppp* observed eight bars into the *Adagio*; the Fugue and *vivace molto* sections are despatched with scintillating precision.

Andreas Rothkopf at the Sauer Organ in the Evangelische Stadtkirche, Bad Homburg shares all these qualities with Preston in a 2000 recording produced and engineered by the distinguished German-American organist Wolfgang Rübsam. In fact, the two voices of the vivace molto are heard even more clearly - and that is saying something. Yet overall Rothkopf does not generate the same spinetingling thrill as Preston. He is one of several players (the others in this survey are Guillou, Weir, Kynaston and King) who extend the two long diminished chords at bars 455 and 464 over the succeeding bars of semiquavers. Liszt, who we know did not have a good pedal technique, may not have thought it physically possible for rapid semiquavers to be played





THE HISTORICAL CHOICE

Jeanne Demessieux Beulah (M) 1PD29

If you can live with those extra bars just before the *Allegro deciso*, Demessieux's bravura and the concert hall acoustic make for an undeniably gripping experience, even though she does not reveal every aspect of the music.





AN INSPIRED COUPLING

Simon Preston

DG M → 415 139-2GH

With or without Reubke's Sonata on the 94th Psalm, Simon Preston's 'Ad nos' is a remarkable account, but to have the two most important organ works of the 19th century side by side makes this an irresistible disc.





THE BARGAIN CHOICE

Andreas Rothkopf Naxos (\$) 8 555079

Volume 2 of Liszt's organ works on Naxos has transcriptions by Winterberger (who premiered 'Ad nos') and his friend Gottschalg (the popular *Consolation in D flat major* for piano is now Concertstück in A major). Well worth investigating.

by the feet, or for semiquavers to be divided between the feet and left hand, leaving the right hand free to hold down these chords. He would surely have approved this alternative which appears in Marcel Dupré's (solo) edition of the work - so long as the pedal line is heard clearly. Otherwise the music descends into a noisy Gothic rant straight from The Phantom of the Opera. Roger Fisher, alas, is one such. Recorded in the swimmy acoustic of the Marktkirche, Wiesbaden in 2001, he gives us the full majesty of the work. It's a wonderful instrument and Fisher taps into its multi-coloured voices in masterly fashion, but in the 'Liszt-Dupré' passage and elsewhere it is impossible to hear what exactly is going on in the generalised, if impressive, wash of sound.

Two distinguished female organists are heard in the empty Royal Albert Hall: Jennifer Bate in 1977 and Gillian Weir in 2004. There is scarcely a bar in 'Ad nos' in which Liszt does not use the chorale theme in some shape or form, and there is scarcely a bar in Ms Bate's performance (at 26'05", hers is the fastest on disc) that does not let you hear exactly what he wrote. In the più mosso section, just before the coda, she eschews Liszt's pianistic octave semiquavers for more organistic staccato quavers, and then injects some pace leading up to the final apotheosis. Few shape the huge span of the work's narrative so transparently, and even with reduced wind pressure and some dodgy tuning the mighty Willis thunders

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY





















DATE	ARTISTS	RECORD COMPANY (REVIEW DATE)
1928	Cunningham	Amphion (P) PHICD136
1952	Demessieux	Beulah (M) 1PD29 (4/53)
1955	Cochereau	Solstice (P) (2) SOCD177/8
1968	Kynaston	Guild (F) GMCD7210 (1/69)
1969	Darasse	Erato (£) 4509-92407-2 (1/71)
1977	Bate	Resonance ® CDRSN3077 (7/94 ^R)
1980	Guillou	Accord (P) 480 0989 (11/80)
1980	Fagius	BIS (Ē) BIS-CD170 (11/81)
1983	Haselböck	Orfeo (Ē) C125 901A
1984	Scott	Guild GMCD7128
1984	Preston	DG M → 415 139-2GH (7/85)
1991	Trotter	Decca (Ē) 440 283-2DH (10/94)
2000	Rothkopf	Naxos ® 8 555079
2001	Fisher	Amphion © PHICD176
2003	Herrick	Hyperion © CDA67458
2004	Schönheit	Dabringhaus und Grimm (E) MDG606 1352-2 (1/06)
2004	Weir	Priory (E) PRCD859 (7/O5)
2007	Nolan	Signum ® SIGCD167
2011	King	Regent (\$) (3) REGCD278 (7/11)





Editor's Choice for the November Issue

Disc of the month

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Berlioz	Les Nuits d'Été + Handel	Lieberson, McGegan £12.50
Lutosławski	Vocal Works C	rowe, Spence, Gardner £10.25
Mahler	Symphony No.3 (2SACD)	Honeck £21.50
Mozart	Dissonances	Quatuor Ebène £11.25
Parsons	Sacred Music Card	inall's Musick, Carwood £10.25
Poulenc	Dialogues Des Carmélites	(DVD) Muti £24.00
Terradellas	Sesostri (3cp)	Otero £25.00
Verdi	Messa da Requiem (2cb)	Rysanek, Reiner £ 9.00
	Royal Concertgebouw Anti	nology (14CD) (1990-2000) £95.00
	Vanishing Nordic Chorale	Musik Ekklesia £12.50

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Bach JS	Instrumental Concertos (6cp) Café Zimmermann	
Bach JS	Goldberg Variations, arr. Viols (2cp) Fretwork	
Beethoven	Karajan on Deutsche Grammophon (13cb) Karajan !	
Beethoven	Complete Piano & Orch.(4cb) Little, Hugh, Shelley !	
Bruckner	Symphony No. 4 (SACD) LSO, Haitink !	
Bruckner	Symphony No. 7 Nagano !	£11.95
Chopin	Recordings 1972-2008 (9cD) Pollini !	£22.50
Debussy	Fantaisie for Piano & Orchestra Markl !	£ 5.30
Delius	Edition (8cp Decca) Mackerras !	£26.00
Donizetti	Anna Bolena (DVD) Netrebko, Garanča s	£17.00
Haydn	String Quartets Op.71 Takacs Quartet 9	£10.25
Liszt	+ Grieg Piano Concertos Hough, Litton !	£10.25
MacMillan	Miserere Sixteen, Christophers	£11.50
Mozart	Symphonies Nos.39 & 40 Abbado 9	£10.75
Mozart	Piano Concertos Nos.19 & 23 Hélène Grimaud !	£10.75
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V-Williams	Flos Campi, Suite for Viola etc. Brabbins !	
Widor	2 Piano Concertos (Romantics Vol.25) Becker, Fischer !	
	Homage to Maria Callas (Deluxe) Angela Gheorghiu	
	The Decca Sound (50cd) Various	
	Complete Decca Studio (23cp) Joan Sutherland	
	Complete Decod Clasic (2000) Coan California a	200.00

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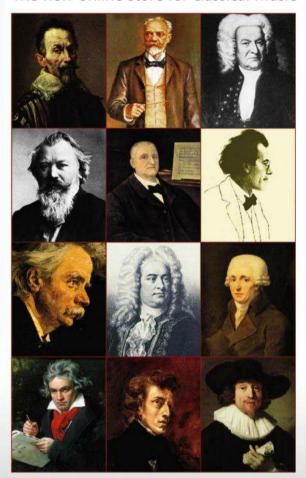
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THE TOP CHOICE

Thomas Trotter
Decca (©) 440 283-2DH
Thomas Trotter's respect for Liszt's
text, and his colouristic and expressive
imagination are combined with supreme
technical finesse and a clear shaping of the
architectural span of 'Ad nos'. Decca's
1991 recording also includes *Variations*on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen, and
Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H.



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forth marvellously, though not quite as thunderously as in the hands and feet of Dame Gillian. This was the first recording made on the newly restored organ (2004) and as a speaker workout it's in the demonstration class. But compelling as much of it is, this is more representative of the Willis's capabilities than an illuminating account of 'Ad nos'.

The same must be said of an equally lauded recording (a one-time Gramophone Editor's Choice) by Nicolas Kynaston. In the spacious acoustic of Ingoldstadt Münster with a reverb of about 12 seconds stands the awesome Klais organ. At full throttle it makes the Albert Hall's Willis sound like a harmonium. Sonically, the recording is an overwhelming experience with a resourceful multi-choice of colours and a huge dynamic range. But detail? Too often one is engulfed in indistinct pedal rumble, distracted by the bluster of the playing and fast passagework that tumbles over itself in the sound picture. You need to follow with a score to fully benefit from Kynaston's and Dame Gillian's recordings.

For a similar acoustic but more detail turn to **John Scott** in 1984 on one of the finest of all cathedral organs, the Willis of St Paul's Cathedral, London. In the Fantasy, tempo relationships are somewhat disjointed and pedal definition is at a premium in the splendid welter of sound, but the *Adagio*, especially the latter part, is beautifully and ethereally voiced, the linking *Allegro deciso* and the final pages thrillingly achieved in a powerhouse performance.

Christopher Herrick, in the drier acoustic of the Winspear Centre, Edmonton (Canada),

begins as Weir, Kynaston, Bate and many others do by charging off at fortissimo, way above Liszt's moderato, and failing to keep the subsequent sections of the Fantasy related to that. 'Ad nos' should unfold gradually and not reveal all in its first pages. Hyperion's 2003 recording is the only one that prefaces the performance with an unadorned statement of the chorale theme. Herrick goes to great pains to allow us to hear its myriad harmonic and rhythmic variations in a characteristically reliable, surefooted reading that seamlessly captures Liszt's visionary span. The 2002 Létourneau Organ, however, will not be to everyone's taste. Boasting 16ft and 8ft trompettes en chamade, an 8ft tuba magna and a 32ft bombardon, its nasal reeds sound brash and far too much of a good thing en grand choeur.

For a genuine 19th-century symphonic organ, the Cavaillé-Coll of Saint-Sulpice, Paris, is one that Liszt would have known.

Joseph Nolan puts it through its paces in his 2007 recording but I can't say that it's the most thrilling view of the work. The concluding *un poco più di moto* section of the *Adagio* is blandly coloured, the *vivace molto* pages of the finale merely efficient and dutiful.

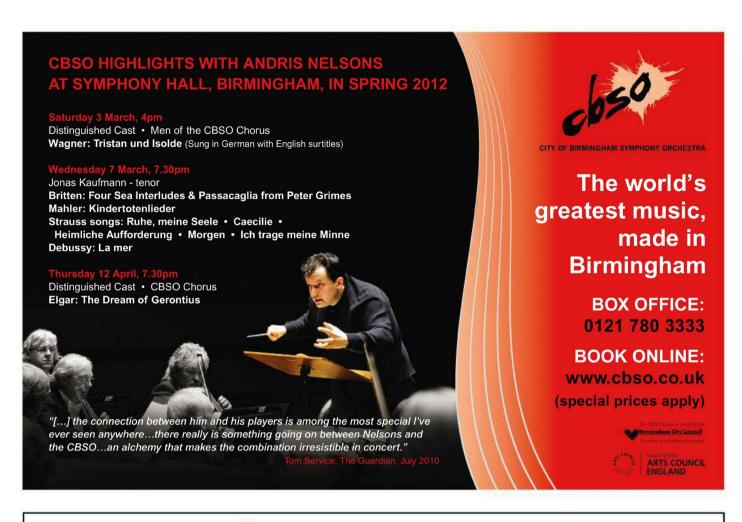
The most recent recording to come my way is to be found in **Peter King**'s three-disc set of Liszt organ works (reviewed in the July issue, 2011) played on the Klais organ of Bath Abbey. King's 'Ad nos' is as impressive in its execution as any – perhaps his registration is a little conservative – and Gary Cole, the producer and engineer, has managed to strike that difficult balance

between capturing a powerful instrument in a cathedral acoustic while not sacrificing textural definition.

I want to hear everything that Liszt's genius poured into this score. This new Regent recording is near the top of my preferred choices. It is certainly one to live with and return to. In addition, it comes in a three-CD set of Liszt's other organ music. I have a personal fondness for Xavier Darasse's exciting, if cavalier, way with the work, but the tuning issue deprives it of a top recommendation. Like Darasse's, Simon Preston's recording illuminates rather than obscures the printed notes but is far more respectful of Liszt's dynamics. It has the particularly apt coupling of the Reubke Sonata.

What Preston's impressive account misses is something that my top choice achieves better than anyone else, and that is the sense of a spiritual journey. Liszt's text for his sermon, so to speak, is 'Come to us, oh unhappy people, come to the waves of salvation!' Thomas Trotter with his sombre (arguably too desolate) opening portrays the unhappy peoples' inner struggle and torment in the Fantasy; the Adagio brings a vision of enlightenment and hope; the Fugue sweeps the naysayers aside with ever-mounting exultation. With the final apotheosis of the theme, journey's end, there is no doubt that the Anabaptists have achieved their aim. Their audience has 'come to the waves of salvation'. And you are hearing the story on the same instrument that Liszt's first audience would have heard it. 6

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TOGRAPHY: MARTIN LITENS, MANFRED KLIMEK

MUSICAL JOURNEYS

Gramophone's monthly search for the best classical music experiences around the world



Harriet Smith enjoys a winter wonderland of musical delights, variety and conviviality at Sweden's Vinterfest



ow is the time to book your trip to Vinterfest. The atmospherically named festival is staged every February in Mora, a three-and-a-half-hour train journey north of Stockholm, and, since tickets are highly prized, you'd be advised to buy yours before the Christmas rush sets in. When I went this year it was during a cold snap – even by northern Swedish standards. The snow coated the roads as well as building on the strange, pristine glacial walls – eight-foot high and more – made by the snowploughs. That is one of the perils, and attractions, of Mora, principally famous for two things: as the birthplace of the great Swedish painter Anders Zorn; and as the finishing post for the Vasaloppet, a 90km cross-country ski race held in early March.

Vinterfest lasts just four days, but it is action-packed and varied, not just in its repertoire and artists but in its locations. First stop: Skeer, a folk park in what I'm told is a breathtaking setting, though visibility was rather too limited this time. The hall itself was a reminder of Sweden's ardently socialist phase, its lobby adorned with touching, if naive, folk murals. Inside, a French repast of Franck and Chausson was on offer, Janine Jansen's serious take on Franck's Violin Sonata being a particular pleasure. Afterwards, despite the weather, it was outside for fireworks and blueberry soup – think Ribena-lite and you'll get the idea. Almost more striking than the pyrotechnics, though, were

the spindly birch trees, gleaming blue-white against the night sky. The festival also celebrated Mora's most famous son as chamber music was performed in the evocative Zorn Museum, formerly the home of Anders and his wife, Emma. It may once have been a rustic wooden cottage but it became more and more elaborate over the years as Zorn's reputation soared. Schubert's C major Quintet felt entirely at home among the lustrous nudes and antique painted furniture.

It wasn't all about chamber music, either – the Dala Sinfonietta played its part in two concerts that were remarkable for the breadth of their programming: the first included Rota's Piano Concerto (with Vikingur Olafsson), Copland's Clarinet Concerto and songs by Björk, although, alas, the great Icelander wasn't on hand to perform them, and without her edginess some of their impact was lost. The star of

Vinterfest is a festival where warm boots are more useful than posh frocks'

the evening was undoubtedly clarinettist Martin Fröst, now in his sixth season as Vinterfest's artistic director. His offbeat attitude and wide-ranging musical passions not only infuse the festival with striking variety, but also attract both national and international artists as well as audiences of locals and foreign visitors. Demand for entry always outstrips supply at an event that includes a children's concert and jazz by students from the nearby Falun Conservatory.

It's the kind of festival where a warm hat and boots are more useful than posh frocks – as I discovered when I was handed a torch (the flaming kind) for the communal procession back from Mora church. It was –20°C so a bit of heat was welcome, though self-immolation became a serious risk once the wind got up. One melted glove later we were back indoors for the final event of the evening, as musicians let their hair down in a cabaret that revelled in the combined wit and musical brilliance of Fröst and his partners-in-crime.

All that music left little time to explore Mora's wider attractions. Thwarted in my intention to go snow-scootering (ironically, there was too much of the stuff), I was forced instead to explore the manifold delights of Swedish baking. Next February, perhaps...

Grafenegg

Martin Cullingford visits an Austrian festival where composers are given a masterclass in conducting

rafenegg has been written about in these pages before, so I need not dwell for long on the exquisitely beautiful setting of a magnificently eccentric Gothic Revival castle (the then owner visited Walpole's fantasy Gothic villa at Strawberry Hill and apparently said, 'I want one of those'), nestling among the vineyards in the Danube plain, an hour from Vienna. It's been beautifully restored, as has its English-style parkland (only the scorching weather tells me we're a long way from home) which also

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THE 13TH SIBELIUS FESTIVAL, FINLAND 5 – 9 SEPTEMBER 2012



The annual Sibelius Festival is given in the lakeside concert hall in Lahti. All the concerts at the 2012 Festival will be given by the Lahti Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Okko Kamu. A programme of excursions following the composer's life

from his birthplace in Hämeenlinna to his grave at Ainola is also included.

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houses an outside auditorium (of dramatic design and surprisingly good acoustics), and a shoebox chamber hall. Just five years old, Grafenegg's musical reputation has been built on a recipe of high-profile visiting musicians and concerts by the resident Tonkünstler Orchestra, all curated by artistic director Rudolf Buchbinder.

This year, however, they've added a three-day workshop for composer-conductors led by composer-in-residence HK Gruber. And as I walk towards the workshop through the mock-medieval chambers, I hear Gruber barking and think: goodness, what *bave* the six participants let themselves in for? He is, however, merely fooling: mimicking an authoritarian of the old school, of times past. Fooling

'Don't slow down!' Gruber yells at one composer. 'You're killing the music!'

that is – but not joking. Beneath his jovial, bear-like manner, Gruber has a deeply serious point to make and it's one he's here to impart.

But first, he's teaching the composers – aged from their early 20s to their 50s – to conduct their own scores and the lessons come quick-fire. Lesson one: conductors must listen to the music being made then and there, not turn up wanting to create the sound they had imagined in their heads. 'An orchestra is offering us something,' he says. Lesson two: posture. 'The head is too much in the score – stand upright!' Lesson three: tempo. 'Don't slow down,' he yells at the video of a composer in action, recorded earlier. 'You're killing your music!' And I can think of few better mottos for a journalist's desk than lesson four, given as he invites the group to critique one of the attendees' work: 'We must have utmost respect for creative figures – and so what we say must be considered, must have weight.'

Three days of such workshops are followed by a concert of the pieces, played with commitment by members of the Tonkünstler and conducted by their creators. Beforehand I meet the two British participants, Adam Clifford and Chris Petrie. Clifford has never conducted before (so I'll attribute his impressive physical command of rhythm to his other role as percussionist); Petrie has, but feels he's grown over his time here. They're both 24 and both at different points along the uncertain path of a composer – because while the career of an instrumentalist, though no less challenging, has structure, that of a composer remains a more precarious one, their careers requiring champions from the podiums.

Which is perhaps Gruber's main lesson here: if conductors won't perform their works, composers should take matters into their own hands. Quite literally. **6**

The insider's guide

Gramophone's experts select this month's most exciting international music events

London, Wigmore Hall
Steven Isserlis kicks off his
series devoted to voice and
strings in collaboration with Mark
Padmore, Anthony Marwood and
Dénes Várion.

wigmore-hall.org.uk

Glasgow, Concert Halls
Star pianists head to
Scotland for 'The Piano', a threeweek festival celebrating the
keyboard. Artists include Mitsuko
Uchida, András Schiff, Llŷr
Williams, and Alfred Brendel
in conversation.
glasgowconcerthalls.com

EVENT OF THE MONTE

New York, John Jay College

Gotham Chamber Opera teams with the Music Theatre Group and Opera Company of Philadelphia to present the world premiere of *Dark Sisters*, an emotional, lyrical depiction of one woman's struggle with life and faith by young composer-of-themoment, Nico Muhly.

gothamchamberopera.org



12 Tokyo, Teatro Giglio Showa

The Tokyo Symphony celebrates its 65th anniversary away from its home at Muza Kawasaki Symphony Hall, owing to damage from the 2011 Japanese tsunami. Lorin Maazel conducts the First Symphonies of Mahler and Beethoven.

tokyosymphony.com

Los Angeles, Walt Disney Concert Hall

The Los Angeles Master Chorale supports contemporary composers with an expanded version of David Lang's *Little* Match Girl Passion and the US premiere of James Newton's Mass.

lamc.org

18 Ely, Cathedral

St John's College, Cambridge, celebrates its 500th anniversary by teaming up with the choirs of Caius, Clare, Jesus and Trinity colleges, plus the Philharmonia Orchestra under conductor Andrew Nethsingha, in Walton's Belshazzar's Feast.

elycathedral.org

Versailles, L'Opéra Royal

Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques give the first performance in modern times of a forgotten masterpiece, Dauvergne's *Hercule mourant*, to mark the work's 250th anniversary.

lestalenslyriques.com

24 Southampton, Turner Sims

Three Poems, written by 14-yearold Benjamin Britten in 1927, receives its British premiere by the Maggini Quartet, along with Bridge's First Quartet and Vaughan Williams's On Wenlock Edge.

turnersims.co.uk

26 Canterbury, Marlowe Theatre

The Philharmonia Orchestra launches its first season as resident orchestra at the Marlowe, joined by Julian Lloyd Webber in Elgar's Cello Concerto under Martyn Brabbins.

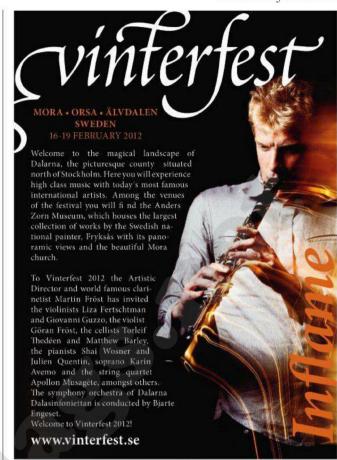
marlowetheatre.com

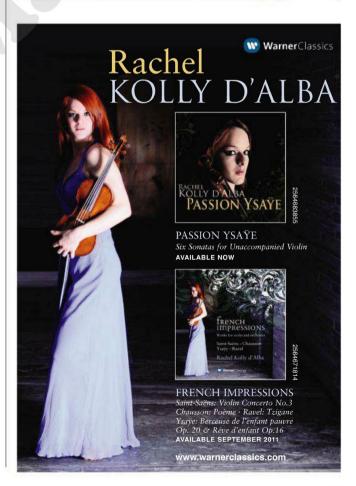
27 Birmingham, Symphony Hall

Freddy Kempf and Tine Thing Helseth join Richard Tognetti and the Australian Chamber Orchestra in Shostakovich's Concerto for Piano, Trumpet and Strings, as part of their European tour. aco.com.au

27 Berlin, Philharmonie

Oslo Philharmonic chief conductor designate Vasily Petrenko test drives the director's chair on his first European tour with the orchestra, taking in Berlin, Vienna and Paris. Joshua Bell joins the orchestra for Sibelius's Violin Concerto. oslofilharmonien.no





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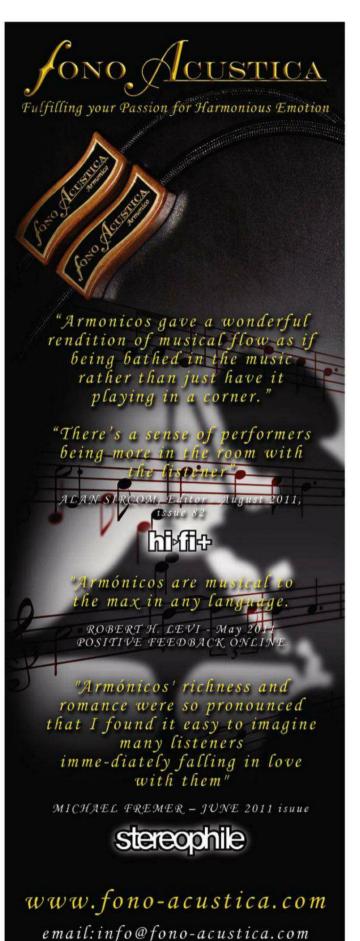
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NOVEMBER'S TEST DISCS



The London Haydn Quartet's set of **Haydn's 'Sun' Quartets, Op 20**, on Hyperion, provide a stern test of any system's ability to resolve detail and get to the heart of a performance.



With a staggeringly clear and vibrant sound, Ensemble Musica Nova's complete **Machaut Motets**, on Aeon, will push any system's dynamic ability to the limit.



This Hyperion set of **Ravel and Lekeu Violin Sonatas** offers
close-up intimacy, revealing
a system's ability to let the
music shine through.

'The streaming revolution gathers pace, but traditional audio isn't dead yet'

Andrew Everard sees computer music options widening, but exciting products in affordable audio, too

he past month or so has seen everything from near-nostalgic trips into how hi-fi used to be, to ever stronger signs that the times are a-changin', and options for listening to music are growing ever greater.

A visit to what I'd been told was one of the last great hi-fi shows – Milan's Top Audio Video – proved a strange mix of the good and the bad. Some interesting products were lost in the darkness of anonymous hotel rooms, while there were also plenty that were only ever likely to be loved by their designer, from huge horn speakers to odd valve amplifiers.

But it was noticeable just how many rooms were using a netbook computer, a trend that many audio companies are now jumping on with computer compatible products. Just recently we've seen the arrival of Audiolab's 8000DAC, a half-width digital-to-analogue converter complete with headphone amplifier and volume control built in. In essence it's the company's 8000CDQ CD player/ preamp shorn of its disc transport and with a highly tuned digital section, and looks like it could be just the thing to get the best possible sound from a modest PC. Naim's

more affordable 'network player', the ND5 XS, was also launched at the Milan show. It was one of two new streaming products from the company – the other, the all-in-one SuperUniti, will be tested in these pages next month. Naim has certainly upped its game – 192kHz/24-bit high resolution playback is now available across the range, and some models are now able to stream Apple Lossless files. Both are important attributes in what's fast becoming a formats 'arms race'.

However, don't think the conventional hi-fi sector is being neglected – and there's plenty of action at the affordable end of the market. I've been hearing good things about the new 2000i speaker series from UK-based Q Acoustics, and their prices start at just £120 for a pair of the baby 10i model.

It's good, too, to see one of the mainstays of value-for-money hi-fi strengthening its position in the market: Marantz has its brand-new CD6004 CD player and PM6004 amplifier in the shops – and they're the subject of our main review this month. **6**

Designed for the modern world of computer-stored music,
 Audiolab's 8000DAC looks a flexible, highly capable unit

Strengthening the company's streaming range, Naim's ND5 XS is a junior version of the NDX tested a few months back

The budget speaker lives on in the Q Acoustics 2000i series, with new drivers, stylish cabinets and the option of piano black finish



gramophone.co.uk GRAMOPHONE NOVEMBER 2011 117

REVIEW PRODUCTS OF THE MONTH

Marantz: high-end quality at a sensible price

There's still a solid market for CD/amplifier combos - even today, says **Andrew Everard**



MARANTZ CD6004/PM6004 CD PLAYER/STEREO AMPLIFIER

Marantz CD6004

Disc formats played CD, CD-R/

RW. MP3. WMA. AAC Outputs Analogue stereo.

optical/coaxial digital, headphones Inputs USB for digital audio from iPod, iPhone or iPad, or

memory devices

Accessories Remote handset Dimensions (WxHxD)

44x33.9x10.6cm

Marantz PM6004 Price £310

Power 45Wpc into 8 ohms, 60W

Inputs MM phono, three line, two tape optical/coaxial digital. headphones

Outputs Two tape, speakers A/B, headphones

Tone controls Yes, with Source Direct bypass

Accessories Remote handset Dimensions (WxHxD)

44x36.6x10.5cm marantz.com

he storage of music on a computer is in danger of becoming mainstream. And the iPod, once sneered at, is now finding its way into ever more hi-fi systems. In that context, the launch of a new CD player and stereo amplifier for the mass hi-fi market may seem overly brave. In fact, it's very sensible - a company making sure it has covered all the bases without losing sight of its core values.

Stereo itself has survived what some saw as a takeover of the market by multichannel systems of DVD or Blu-ray players plus AV receivers, and there's no indication that the download/ computer-stored music 'revolution' will herald the end of the CD any time soon.

It's in this context that Marantz has launched its CD6004 CD player and PM6004 stereo amplifier, each selling for £310 and replacing the acclaimed '6003' series products. Not quite entry-level - Marantz also has '5004' models - so why change already successful models in what some feel is a shrinking market? Surely the CD6003 and PM6003 were good enough?

But Marantz Brand Ambassador Ken Ishiwata (see interview, opposite) doesn't do 'good enough' - which is why the products have been upgraded and retuned to ensure they're even more competitive.

The CD6004 has had less upgrading work, says Ishiwata, although a new CD mechanism, power supply improvements, new digital-toanalogue conversion, revisions to the output section (using the company's Hyper-Dynamic Amplifier Module technology) and a vibration damping chassis-plate hardly sounds like leaving well alone. In addition, the frontpanel USB input, as well as allowing a direct digital connection of Apple iOS devices and USB memory devices, and charging of iPods and iPhones, can now charge iPads as well.



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SUGGESTED PARTNERS

Considered choice of speakers will make the most of the Marantz duo





MONITOR AUDIO BRONZE BX2

At £250 a pair, these excellent little speakers will suit the Marantzes well



PMC DB1i

A large step up in price and performance at £1050/pr but they make the Marantz duo shine

Otherwise, it's business as usual for a CD player at this level: the CD6004 has a smooth, solid-feeling loader for the disc mechanism, a choice of analogue stereo or optical and electrical digital outputs, a headphone amplifier with its own volume control, and sockets for linking it to other Marantz components for integrated remote control.

Like the player, the PM6004 closely resembles the model it replaces, having one of Ishiwata's high-quality phono stages for LP playback using a turntable fitted with a moving magnet cartridge, three line inputs, two tape loops, twin speaker outputs with A/B switching and, again, those remote control sockets. The

£275 Arcaydis DM1s as a minimum. **However**, the Marantz amplifier is capable of driving and controlling much more ambitious designs, for example PMC's compact GB1i floorstanders, at well over twice the cost of the CD/amplifier.

What is striking, though, is just how much better the 6004 models sound beside the outgoing 6003s. In the case of the CD player, the improvements are subtle – better definition makes it easier to follow the vocal lines in the Machaut motets (the timbres are really attention-grabbing). It's almost as though the whole noise-floor is lowered, throwing the music-making into sharper relief and letting the dynamics breathe more freely, most

'This is a remarkable CD player for a long way short of highend money - but the amplifier is the true revelation here'

amplifier delivers 2x45W into an 8 ohm load, has tone controls bypassable using a 'Source Direct' button and even a loudness button. It's all designed for mass-market needs – but under the lid the amplifier is completely new. The integrated circuits of the PM6003 have been replaced with a preamplifier and power amplifier using discrete components, all in the quest for better sound quality.

PERFORMANCE

The Marantz pairing is about as 'plug-in-andplay' as hi-fi gets these days: solid, vibrationdamping casework makes positioning noncritical and 'tweakery' isn't needed to get the best from them. Nor are the Marantz duo too fussy about partnering equipment: it'd be fine hooked up to cost-effective interconnect cables – I used Chord Crimson, at about £36 or so for a stereo pair – and sensible speakers; I'd suggest Monitor Audio's £250 BX2s or the

notably in the attack of the percussion. By any standards this is a remarkable CD player for a long way short of high-end money. However, the amplifier is the true revelation here, whether used with the CD6004 or other players. It has a wide-open sound with excellent control and power, plus renewed speed and vigour. The London Haydn Quartet's set of the Sun Quartets reveals the deft, pacy sound of the Marantz, and its ability to deliver the character of all the instruments is enthralling. And, combined with the CD player, it allows an intimate, close-focused rendition of the Hyperion disc of Ravel works for violin and piano. The result is a warm, almost luminous sound and, considering the low prices, the quality really is remarkable.

They may sit near the entry level of what is still a comprehensive stereo range from Marantz but this player and amplifier are recommended without hesitation. **G**

DESIGN NOTES

Ken Ishiwata

His Baroque was good, but not his Beethoven...

Audible in all current Marantz products is the influence of the company's brand ambassador. Ken Ishiwata. He's responsible for the sound, is the 'KI' in its KI Signature range, and in 2009 celebrated 30 years with the company.

Music is at the heart of how Ishiwata designs products - he's no anonymous backroom engineer boffin but travels the world demonstrating the Marantz range.

In common with many Japanese schoolchildren, he learnt the violin at an early age. 'I did win a few contests,' he says, 'but eventually my professor said to me "Ken, your Baroque is wonderful but the problem is your Beethoven! It's awful." That was when I decided enough was enough.'

He believes classical music puts very specific demands on hi-fi equipment.

'It's all about creating a credible image -

without a good sound stage, there's almost no point in listening. The CD player, amplifier and, of course, the speakers play their part in this.'

'If there isn't a good sound stage, there's almost no point in listening'

Ishiwata's latest project
has been the new range from US speaker
company Boston, part of the same group as
Marantz. As is clear from the CD6004 and
PM6004, he still believes in the importance
of affordable hi-fi separates and he's
convinced the CD is here to stay. 'A lot of
people are using CDs to play music at
home and so reasonably priced, goodsounding CD players are still an important
segment of our business.'



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REVIEW NETWORK MUSIC PLAYER

NAD majors on sound, not format flexibility

It has its limits, but NAD's first network streamer is a good buy, says Tony Williams



NAD C 446 NETWORK MEDIA PLAYER/RADIO TUNER

Price £695

Inputs USB iPod dock, Ethernet, Wi-Fi, antennae for

FM, DAB and AM radio

Outputs Line stereo on RCA phonos, optical digital Other connections RS232, 12V trigger in, IR remote Presets 4O, available across DAB. FM and AM

File formats MP3, WAV, FLAC, AAC, WMA, at sampling rates up to 48kHz

Accessories supplied DAB, FM and AM antennae,

remote handse

Dimensions (WxHxD) 44x10x34cm

nadelectronics.com

t first glance, NAD's £695 Digital
Media Tuner seems to have one
hand tied behind its back: there's
no AirPlay to keep Apple fans happy, or
direct digital input to connect with an iPod,
iPhone or iPad (there is a front-panel USB
socket but it's designed for USB flash drives
and the like). NAD hasn't even developed
a control app to drive the unit remotely
over a home network.

However, the C 446 does have a very good conventional built-in radio, able to access FM RDS, AM and – in the European version at least – DAB/DAB+, with presets storing up to 40 stations. It's even able to digitise FM and AM broadcasts, and make them available for recording through the optical digital output it provides alongside the standard left-right analogue audio sockets. It will also access the

thousands of streaming radio stations and music services available on the internet, as well as music stored on a home network using UPnP/DLNA devices. It can also operate as a UPnP receiver under the control of an external device, playing whatever the device tells it to. This can be the 'Play To' option provided in Windows Media Player, which lets you assemble a playlist on the computer and fire it off to a UPnP receiver device such as the NAD.

PERFORMANCE

Those familiar with NAD equipment will know how the company manages to juggle a rich, warm, substantial presentation with detail in the treble and midband, and that's exactly what the C 446 delivers: those who find some equipment of this kind a little brittle or 'edgy'

will be much happier with the sound here, and with the way this player manages to deliver all the presence and atmosphere of a concert-hall recording while still delivering the kind of bass usually associated with very good CD players.

However, CD-quality playback is the best you will get here: unlike pricier devices, the NAD doesn't go up into the rarified realms of high-resolution audio streaming.

It's a highly seductive sound: easy to listen to, and rewarding close attention with a smooth yet vibrant presentation of everything from solo instruments to large-scale orchestral and choral forces. Piano has a beautiful sense of weight and attack, the notes decaying entirely naturally. The NAD gives away only a little to the best streaming players in absolute bass conviction and sparkle in the treble.

Sure, put it up against a top-flight streaming client and the sound stage is a little more congested, and large, reverberant acoustics slightly diminished. Arguably, though, this makes it better suited to the relatively modest amplification and loudspeakers with which it's likely to be used, and flatters lower bit-rate radio streams or music files.

Like NAD's other equipment, this unit presents a rounded, weighty view of a wide range of music, and is simple to use, making it a well-sorted midrange digital music player.



HOW TO TEST...

Given the nature of the NAD, use your computer to rip some demanding music – the Haydn quartets set we've been using this month would be ideal – to a USB stick for testing. Copy as both 'full-fat' CD-quality WAV files and lower-bitrate MP3s, and use that stick to audition the player.





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For example, consider the BEL CANTO CD2 CD Player with its matching C5i amplifier/DAC which provides 60wpc and inputs for all modern source types. Add a pair of ECLIPSE TD510 speakers, chosen by many renowned musicians, and you'll be sharing their experience of beautiful music reproduction.

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ESSAY

Apple's amazing iPod, a decade on (and yes, a movement is still a 'song')

It started with the very simple ambition of revolutionising music, but in the past 10 years Mr Jobs's pocket player has achieved much more, says **Andrew Everard**

he driving force behind Apple, Steve
Jobs, died at the beginning of October,
the day after the launch of a new iPhone
and just a couple of weeks before what is
arguably his single biggest contribution to
consumer electronics – the iPod – hit its
10th anniversary.

True, the iPod was far from unique when it was announced on October 23, 2001 – in fact, there had been MP3 players on the market since 1998, when Eiger Labs' MPMan F10 hit the shops. And at launch it wasn't exactly cheap: the original white iPod, which set the style for what eventually became the 'Classic' line, would have cost you \$399 against the \$250 of the MPMan.

But what the iPod had on its side – along with the soon-to-be-iconic styling and 2001: A Space Odyssey-derived catchy name – was storage capacity: the original model had 5GB, whereas those early MP3 players had arrived on the market with 32MB. Storage was expensive in those days, but whereas the MP3 machines could store just 32 minutes of audio, Jobs could claim at the launch of the iPod that it could put '1000 songs in your pocket'.

Yes, songs: then, as now, in iWorld a track was a song, be it a pop hit or one movement of a Mahler symphony.

But more to the point, an original iPod could store around 100 hours of music or, to put it another way, 100 CDs. These days, iPods go up to 160GB and can store 40,000 songs, or even 200 hours of video.

For Jobs, speaking at the time of the launch, there was another audio icon in the line of fire. 'This is the 21st-century Walkman,' he said in a *Fortune* article headlined, somewhat prophetically, 'CEO Steve Jobs thinks he has something pretty nifty. And if he's right, he might even spook Sony and Matsushita'.

Spooked they were: the iPod has seen off not only Sony's cassette Walkman players but also the MiniDisc machines designed to replace them, while Matsushita (now Panasonic) long ago abandoned the personal audio game, having never quite recovered from the lacklustre performance of the Digital Compact Cassette format.

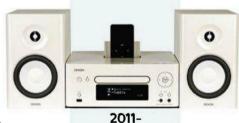
Over a quarter of a billion iPods have now been sold, the line-up currently accounting for well over three quarters of the personal



The original iPod: 5GB of storage, '1000 songs in your pocket' and a price tag of around £300



The latest range of iPods includes these tiny, colourful iPod nano players: 8GB or 16GB, and starting from £115



The iPod (and indeed iPad and iPhone) goes hi-fi, with systems able to connect to it digitally

With over 750m sales, plus iPads, iPhones and 10bn+ iTunes downloads, the iPod has more than fulfilled its original promise'

audio market. Then there are the huge numbers of iPhones and iPads the original design begat, and the iTunes music service's over 10 billion music downloads, along with massive numbers of films, TV shows and the like. I think it can be said that the iPod has more than fulfilled its original promise.

Record companies have come to take the iPod and iTunes seriously, not as a threat to their traditional business but as an important means of distributing releases, and now there's only one set of hearts and minds to win over – the 'serious' audio industry.

Not so long ago I read a piece from a group of hi-fi retailers suggesting that music stored on an iPod was 'pre-ruined', and that the role of the hi-fi retailer was to show users the error of their ways and convert them back to real high-end audio equipment.

A more enlightened approach I heard came at a seminar held by a company founded on affordable turntables but now with a fast-growing range of hi-fi separates: the founder of Pro-ject, Heinz Lichtenegger, has been exhorting dealers to park their sneers when a customer comes in with an iPod, and instead demonstrate just how good the little Apple device can sound when connected through a good audio system.

The iPod dock has been with us for many years but now there are increasing numbers of hi-fi systems and separates, some at prices way beyond the mass market, able to take a digital signal from an iPod and make it sound very good indeed.

And of course, just because you can put 40,000 songs on an iPod in compressed form, that doesn't mean you have to: try loading one up with some works ripped at full CD resolution – you'll still get over 25 hours of music on a 16GB iPod – then connect it up to one of these digitally connected systems, sit back and listen.

Do that, and you may just look at your iPod in a whole new light. **G**

NOTES & LETTERS

When modern becomes ancient · Views from the (viola) bridge · No to 'bravo'

Production errors

Although I had not the clearly doubtful pleasure of attending the Glyndebourne production of Don Giovanni, I agree wholeheartedly with the views of John Harington Hawes (Letters, October). During the past decade I have had to endure, in Dublin, modern productions of Tosca (the prison guards carrying Uzi machine guns), Carmen (the smugglers pushing a vintage car across the stage) and a Magic Flute which, if staged in December, could have been mistaken for a Christmas pantomime. My friend with whom I went to these operas commented that you could close your eyes, as the music was still largely as composed, but I felt that I could achieve this in the comfort of my home at much lesser cost by resorting to my CD collection!

What about modern DVD releases? Turning to your reviews I see that Les Troyens (page 102) has suffered the same fate: Richard Fairman compares the production to a lost episode of Star Wars. I am fortunate in that I have over the years been able to build up a library of opera video tapes in what I would term 'authentic' performances. These I have been able to transfer to DVD so I have no need to purchase modern releases. However, perhaps, all is not lost as in the September issue I saw a review, also by Richard Fairman, of Simon Boccanegra, which he describes as an 'unrepentantly traditional production' (page 89). The fact that he needs to make this distinction suggests that he regards this as a rare event! Gerald Sheean

Dalkey, Co Dublin, Ireland

Modern historics

I didn't think I was old (53) until I read the list of nominees in the 'Historic' category (Awards issue, page 61) and realised that I had read the original review (1971) of one them (Monteverdi's *Poppea*)! Taking note of Andrew Everard's observation that we are now further away from the first CD player going on sale than that event was from the arrival of the stereo LP (October, page 121), how long will it be before the first digital recording is listed as 'Historic'? Dr Matthew McGlennon

via email

Letter of the Month



Memories of Dame Joan

Mike Ashman's comprehensive review of Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor (October, page 98) vividly reawakened for me a special opera trivia experience of 25 years ago.

Young artists of the San Francisco Opera Workshop had musically entertained passengers on board a 1986 cruise from New Zealand to Australia. After docking in Sydney, we were privileged to attend a small reception on the terrace of the Opera House hosted by Dame Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonynge, following a general rehearsal for Lucia di Lammermoor. (We were also invited to the public performance on February 8, when a live recording was made.)

During the informal lunch and reception I was charged to find the right moment to ask Joan Sutherland if she would consider coming to Mexico City to participate in a benefit concert to raise funds for reconstruction of schools destroyed by the devastating earthquake of the previous September 19. (That benefit project had been initiated by the then US Ambassador to Mexico, John Gavin, and Plácido Domingo.) An undaunted but sympathetic Dame Joan commented, 'Oh! Now I've never been to Mexico City but they say the smog and the altitude make it very hard to sing there.' In short, she turned down the offer, with this candid pretext: 'Anyway, dearie, I'm too long in the tooth to be doing those kinds of things anymore!"

The Australian Opera Lucia live performance was memorable - because of Sutherland and Bonynge - but less than glorious. I don't think I need on my shelves this Australian Opera Lucia audio CD or video film but I will certainly look for her 1959 ROH Covent Garden debut, with Serafin, on CD, of which I was ignorant until the review.

Sutherland's 1971 'benchmark' Decca Lucia I continue to treasure as, too, I treasure Callas's live recordings of Lucia from Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City (June 1952), including four distinctly amazing renditions of 'Il dolce suono del Dio d'Amore'. Ian Thomas, Mexico City

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More fine viola players

I found Charlotte Smith's article regarding the emergence of the viola into the musical limelight (October, page 44) to be of welcome interest. However, regretfully no mention was made of two of the finest contemporary viola players – namely Kim Kashkashian and Barbara Westphal, both of whom have contributed greatly to expanding their instrument's repertoire. I am especially fond of the former's CD of all of Hindemith's chamber works for viola (ECM), as well as the latter's CD of the Bach Cello Suites (Bridge) in her own transcription.

Joseph M Friedman Oakland, CA, USA

No bravos, please

Richard Martini (Letters, Awards issue) asks if anyone else feels the need for record companies to state whether applause is included on their live recordings. The short answer from this purchaser of CDs is, no, I really don't care. The longer answer is: whether on disc or in a concert hall, it does rather depend on the applause.

The Bravo Man – you know the one, not really interested in the music, only in enjoying his 15 microseconds of fame by getting in before anyone else. The Bravo Man shouting through the fading last note of Mahler's Ninth, should simply be shot. Actually, he should be shot regardless. On the other hand, a genuinely enthusiastic cry, whipped up by the closing swirl of the same composer's Fifth, is quite a different matter.

I notice that some conductors seem to have the ability to exercise total control over audiences. This, I think, may be the answer with Gardiner's Bach. There's the subject matter, of course – people may still wonder whether it's really proper to applaud church music – and I suspect that they are also scared silly of Gardiner, who, if his reputation is anything to go by, makes those he considers fools suffer very badly indeed. *William Johnston*

Brighton, Brighton & Hove, UK

Keep applause apart

I agree with every word of Richard Martini's email. The inclusion of applause is profoundly irritating to many and the answer lies with the record companies themselves: the applause on the Berlin/Abbado recording of Mahler's Sixth is separately banded. Where this is not done, your reviewer should certainly be required to report that fact in the review in question. Mike Jackson Sheffield, UK

OBITUARIES

Tributes to four figures who enriched the musical world

INGVAR WIXELL

Baritone Born May 7, 1931 Died October 8, 2011

Ingvar Wixell was a great baritone who defied conventional wisdom. Depending on one's perspective, he was either a Mozartian with a beefy fist to the voice or a natural Scarpia whose inherent elegance, so insinuating in Puccini, could be turned to a more classical bent. The truth, of course, was that he was blessed with a highly versatile voice, soft-grained yet tough when it was needed to be. As Sir Colin Davis told *Gramophone*, 'He was very musical, he rarely made mistakes and, wonderfully, he could be sensitive or fierce where called for. Like Shakespeare's Bottom, he could croon like a dove or roar like a lion.'

As can be seen from a riveting film of *Tosca* from the Verona Arena (with Wixell alongside Raina Kabaivanska and Giacomo Aragall), he was also an accomplished actor. That versatility even extended to the 1965 Eurovision Song Contest, at which he represented his native Sweden.

If Wixell's alma mater was Stockholm's Royal Swedish Opera and his home house became the Deutsche Oper in Berlin (of



whose ensemble he remained part for some three decades), he was a truly international singer. Scarpia came to be a signature role (one, so rumour has it, that he latterly enjoyed singing because it didn't require too much time on stage) and one which he recorded for Sir Colin Davis, with Montserrat Caballé as his Tosca. Davis became a regular recording partner, for whom Wixell also recorded Don Giovanni, Count Almaviva. Renato (Un ballo in maschera) and Marcello (La bohème). Other memorable sets include a rather Donizettian Il trovatore for Richard Bonynge alongside Dame Joan Sutherland and José Carreras (another regular colleague), and Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's film of Rigoletto, with Pavarotti as the Duke and Wixell doing double honours in the title-role and as the count who curses him.

His last role was as the Music-Master in Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, in his home town of Malmö. James Inverne

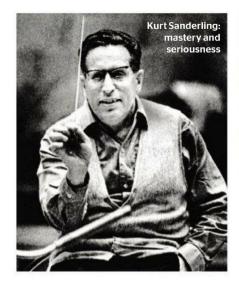
KURT SANDERLING

Conductor Born September 19, 1912 Died September 17, 2011

Kurt Sanderling, one of very few conductors actually to have retired, has died aged 98. A superb exponent of the great Austro-German repertoire (he left much-admired cycles of the symphonies of both Brahms and Beethoven), Sanderling also excelled at the music of his adopted Russia, particularly Prokofiev and Shostakovich.

Born in the former East Prussia (now Poland), Sanderling studied the piano in Königsberg and Berlin before joining the Berlin State Opera as a répétiteur. In 1933 the rise of the Nazis led to his dismissal 'as a non-Aryan' and he left Germany and settled in Moscow. Soon he was assisting Georges Sebastian, then principal conductor of the Moscow RSO, after which he moved to take up a conducting post in Ukraine.

It was around this time – the war years – that Sanderling started conducting the music of Shostakovich, giving one of the earliest performances of the Sixth Symphony. He finally met the composer in 1943 and they became lifelong friends, and Sanderling one of his most loyal champions. His recording of Symphony No 15 is one of the finest this quirky work has received. Later, he was also one of the first conductors to champion

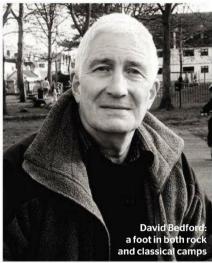


Deryck Cooke's performing edition of Mahler's Tenth Symphony, a work premiered by Sanderling's friend, the composer Berthold Goldschmidt.

In 1941 Sanderling became assistant to the great Evgeny Mravinsky at the Leningrad Philharmonic, one of the world's greatest ensembles, and he started to record with the orchestra. His powerful interpretation of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony was joined on a DG mono set by Mravinsky's Fifth and Sixth – the two men's visions were wonderfully complementary. He also recorded Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*.

In 1960 he became principal conductor of the Berlin SO (with which he recorded the Sibelius symphonies) and between 1964 and 1967 he led the Staatskapelle Dresden (it was with this orchestra that he made his superb Brahms cycle for Eurodisc/RCA). His UK debut came in 1972 when he conducted the Philharmonia Orchestra, the orchestra with which he recorded a Beethoven symphony cycle for EMI (lavishly branded in red by the sponsor Du Maurier); he was subsequently appointed conductor emeritus by the orchestra.

Later he became a welcome guest, performing with the Los Angeles PO, the BPO, the Madrid SO, Tokyo's Nippon SO, the BRSO and the Concertgebouw Orchestra (he conducted the latter two in a Beethoven piano concerto cycle with Mitsuko Uchida as soloist), and many others: players admired his quiet mastery of his art and the seriousness of his approach. A very fine 1978 Bruckner Third Symphony with the BBC Northern SO (now the BBC Philharmonic) has been issued by ICA Classics and there is a Mahler Fourth on BBC Legends with the same orchestra. James Jolly



DAVID BEDFORD

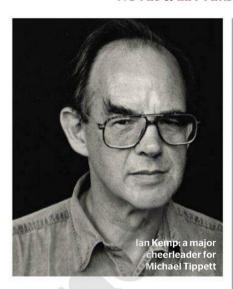
Composer Born August 4, 1937 Died October 1, 2011

In a recent interview the composer David Bedford, who has died aged 74, remembered one of his children storming upstairs and blasting out loud music as a protest. 'I went up and said "I wrote the strings on that," which rather destroyed their argument.'

In British music, Bedford was unique. At a time when central European 'high' modernism was still viewed contemptuously at home, Bedford relocated to Venice to study with Luigi Nono. Works from this first 'modernist' period, including *The Tentacles of the Dark Nebula* (1969), written for Peter Pears from a text by Arthur C Clarke, were keenly heard, and stand the test of time.

But in 1969, due both to economic need and genuine interest, Bedford began to involve himself in rock music. He played keyboards with Kevin Ayers's The Whole World and became prog rock's arranger of choice, performing on Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* and orchestrating *The Orchestral Tubular Bells*. He also arranged for Elvis Costello and Madness, making him the only composer to work with both Luigi Nono and Suggs.

In 1971 Pierre Boulez pulled a performance of Bedford's 100 Kazoos when it was revealed that Bedford intended handing kazoos out to the audience. His later 'concert' music marked a return to tonality, which Bedford always treated in a personal way. When it came to whimsy, he was unafraid. A passionate advocate for music education, he devised compositions for children using graphic notation: 'You can't assume they'll all know what a crotchet is,' he explained. Philip Clark



IAN KEMP

Musicologist Born June 26, 1931 Died September 16, 2011

Guaranteed immortality with the dedication of Tippett's Fourth Symphony in 1977, Ian Kemp was the leading authority on the composer's music and an expert, too, on Berlioz, Hindemith and Kurt Weill. He was professor of music at Leeds and later Manchester, following previous lecturing posts at Aberdeen and Cambridge, where he was also a Fellow of St John's College (his alma mater), for which Tippett wrote his only liturgical composition, the celebrated *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* in 1961.

Kemp met Tippett in his first major role after graduating when he worked at the composer's publisher, Schott, in London. His first book was the first to be published on Tippett, a wide-ranging tribute edited for his 60th birthday in 1965. The publication of Kemp's magnum opus Tippett: The Composer and his Music in 1984 enshrined the hallmarks of his style of writing: lucidity of thought, precision of expression and a rare humanity of insight, all qualities that were also reflected in his outward demeanour and which have all but disappeared from academic discourse today, burdened as it is by all that Kemp detested in the form of pretentious jargonese and specious Americanised theorising. In so many ways he was the last of an enlightened breed and his book is arguably the finest yet published on any great British composer.

Ian Kemp's warmth as a mentor brought him many devoted pupils, notable among them the pianist Steven Osborne. Another, the conductor Sian Edwards, gave enormous peace and joy to his final decades. Geraint Lewis **RECORDS WANTED**



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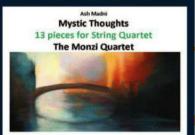


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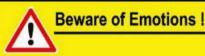
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Breier) Malfatti nariyamu Mangoré Allegro La catedral Marianelli, D Jane Eyre – soundtrack Martin Concerto for Wind, Timpani, Percussion and Strings Matamoros Juramente Matthews, C Night-Spell Mello O Presidente Mendelssohn	Various sacred choral works Pedersøn	La scuola de' gelosi – Sinfonia Sanz/Murzia Marizapalos 73 Scheidt Canzon cornetto 85 På dig jag hoppas 87 Schnittke Concerto grosso No 1 42 Moz–Art à la Haydn 42 Schoenberg Five Orchestra Pieces, Op 16 Verklärte Nacht, Op 4 54 Schreker Vom ewigen Leben 54 Schubert Symphonies Nos 2 & 3 100 Symphony No 9 54 Symphony No 9 54 Schumann	The Nightingale Puer nobis nascitur Takemitsu A Flock Descends 54 Tárrega Gran vals (arr Goldstone) Tchaikovsky Piano Trio, Op 50 Terradellas Sesostri 93 Traditional Cousin Sally Brown Der mange skal komme (arr Spray) Mitt hjerte elltid vanker (arr Spray) 87 Såsom stjärnan uppå Himmelen (arr Berger) 73 Springlåt från Lima (arr Berger) 73	Z Zemlinsky Symphonische Gesänge, Op 20 54 Zimmermann, BA Trumpet Concerto 54 Collections Alexander Balanescu; Ada Milea – 'The Island' 54 RCO – 'Anthology 6: 1990–2000' 54 Carl Davis – 'Heroines in Music' 57 Manfred Eicher – 'Sounds and Silence' 220 65 Anthony Goldstone; Caroline Clemmow – 'Delicias' 73 Hespèrion XXI – 'Hispania & Japan' 67
Breier) Malfatti nariyamu Mangoré Allegro La catedral Marianelli, D Jane Eyre – soundtrack Martin Concerto for Wind, Timpani, Percussion and Strings Matamoros Juramente Matthews, C Night-Spell Mello O Presidente Mendelssohn	Various sacred choral works Pederson Nor Gud han er så fast en borg 87 Penderecki Gello Concerto No 2 51 Symphony No 4, 'Adagio' 51 Viola Concerto 51 Viola Concerto 51 Milongón festivo 55 Pijper Zes symfonische epigrammen 54 Pixinguinha Carinhoso 67 Pizzetti String Quartets - Nos 1 & 2 63 Porpora 12 Cantatas to HRH Frederick Prince of Wales, Op 1 Nos 7 - 12 81 Sei duetti latini sulla passione di nostro signore Gesù Cristo 87 87 Potential del control signore Gesù Cristo 88 Potential control signore Gesù Cristo 88 Potential control signore Gesù Cristo 87 Potential control signore Gesù Cristo 87 Potential control signore Gesù Cristo 88 Potential control signore Gesù Cristo 87 Potential control signore Gesù Cristo 88 Potential control signore Gesù Cristo 88 Potential control control signore Gesù Cristo 88 Potential control contr	La scuola de' gelosi – Sinfonia Sanz/Murzia Marizapalos 73 Scheldt Canzon cornetto 85 På dig jag hoppas 87 Schnittke Concerto grosso No 1 42 Moz–Art à la Haydn 42 Schoenberg Five Orchestra Pieces, Op 16 Verklärte Nacht, Op 4 Schreker Vom ewigen Leben 54 Schubert Symphonies Nos 2 & 3 Symphony No 9 Symphony No 9 Schumann Albumblätter, Op 124 72	The Nightingale Puer nobis nascitur Takemitsu A Flock Descends 54 Tárrega Gran vals (arr Goldstone) Tchaikovsky Piano Trio, Op 50 G4 Terradellas Sesostri 93 Traditional Cousin Sally Brown Der mange skal komme (arr Spray) Mitt bjerte elltid vanker (arr Spray) Såsom stjärnau uppå Himmelen (arr Berger) Springlåt från Lima (arr Berger) Tromboncino	Zemlinsky Symphonische Gesänge, Op 20 54 Zimmermann, BA Trumpet Concerto 54 Collections Alexander Balanescu; Ada Milea – 'The Island' 75 RCO – 'Anthology 6: 1990–2000' 54 Carl Davis – 'Heroines in Music' 57 Manfred Eicher – 'Sounds and Silence' 2006 Anthony Goldstone; Caroline Clemmow – 'Delicias' 73 Hespèrion XXI – 'Hispania & Japan' 'Frottole: Songs from the Courts of
Breier) Malfatti nariyamu Mangoré Allegro La catedral Marianelli, D Jane Eyre – soundtrack Martin Concerto for Wind, Timpani, Percussion and Strings Matamoros Juramente Matthews, C Night-Spell Mello O Presidente Mendelssohn Forlen os freden, Herre, nu Messiaen	Various sacred choral works Pedersøn Vor Gud han er så fast en borg Penderecki	La scuola de' gelosi – Sinfonia Sanz/Murzia Marizapalos 73 Scheidt Canzon cornetto 85 På dig jag hoppas 87 Schnittke Concerto grosso No 1 42 Moz–Art à la Haydn 42 Schoenberg Five Orchestra Pieces, Op 16 Verklärte Nacht, Op 4 Schreker Vom ewigen Leben 54 Schubert Symphonies Nos 2 & 3 Symphony No 9 Schumann Albumblätter, Op 124 Carnaval, Op 9 73 73 74 75 75 76 77 78 78 78 78 78 78 78 78	The Nightingale Puer nobis nascitur Takemitsu A Flock Descends 54 Tárrega Gran vals (arr Goldstone) Tichaikovsky Piano Trio, Op 50 64 Terradellas Sesostri 93 Traditional Cousin Sally Brown Der mange skal komme (arr Spray) Mitt hjerte elltid vanker (arr Spray) 87 Såsom stjärnan uppå Himmelen (arr Berger) Springlåt från Lima (arr Berger) Tromboncino Frottole songs 84	Zemlinsky Symphonische Gesänge, Op 20 54 Zimmermann, BA Trumpet Concerto 54 Collections Alexander Balanescu; Ada Milea – 'The Island' 75 RCO – 'Anthology 6: 1990–2000' 54 Carl Davis – 'Heroines in Music' 57 Manfred Eicher – 'Sounds and Silence' 220 65 Anthony Goldstone; Caroline Clemmow – 'Delicias' 73 Hespèrion XXI – 'Hispania & Japan' 67 'Frottole: Songs from the Courts of Renaissance Italy' 84
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Breier) Malfatti nariyamu Mangoré Allegro La catedral Marianelli, D Jane Eyre – soundtrack Martin Concerto for Wind, Timpani, Percussion and Strings Matamoros Juramente Matthews, C Night-Spell Mello O Presidente Mendelssohn Forlen os freden, Herre, nu Messiaen Trois Petites Liturgies Mignone Congada	Various sacred choral works Pedersøn Vor Gud han er så fast en borg Penderecki	La scuola de' gelosi – Sinfonia Sanz/Murzia Marizapalos 73 Scheidt Canzon cornetto 85 På dig jag hoppas 87 Schnittke Concerto grosso No 1 42 Moz–Art à la Haydn 42 Schoenberg Five Orchestra Pieces, Op 16 Verklärte Nacht, Op 4 54 Schreker Vom ewigen Leben 54 Schubert Symphonies Nos 2 & 3 100 Symphony No 9 54 Symphony No 9 54 Symphony No 9 54 Schumann Albumblätter, Op 124 72 Carnaval, Op 9 72 Der Himmel hat ein Träne geweint,	The Nightingale Puer nobis nascitur Takemitsu A Flock Descends 54 Tárrega Gran vals (arr Goldstone) Tchaikovsky Piano Trio, Op 50 64 Terradellas Sesostri 93 Traditional Cousin Sally Brown Der mange skal komme (arr Spray) Mitt hjerte elltid vanker (arr Spray) 87 Såsom stjärnan uppå Himmelen (arr Berger) 73 Springlåt från Lima (arr Berger) 73 Tromboncino Frottole songs 84 Turnage Anna Nicole	Zemlinsky Symphonische Gesänge, Op 20 54 Zimmermann, BA Trumpet Concerto 54 Collections Alexander Balanescu; Ada Milea – 'The Island' 75 RCO – 'Anthology 6: 1990–2000' 54 Carl Davis – 'Heroines in Music' 57 Manfred Eicher – 'Sounds and Silency 65 Anthony Goldstone; Caroline Clemmow – 'Delicias' 73 Hespèrion XXI – 'Hispania & Japan' 'Frottole: Songs from the Courts of Renaissance Italy' 84 Sharon Isbin – 'Guitar Passions' 67 Gidon Kremer – 'Paganini's Daemon: A Most Enduring Legend' (film)
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Breier) Malfatti nariyamu Mangoré Allegro La catedral Marianelli, D Jane Eyre – soundtrack Martin Concerto for Wind, Timpani, Percussion and Strings Matamoros Juramente Matthews, C Night-Spell Mello O Presidente Mendelssohn Forlen os freden, Herre, nu Messiaen Trois Petites Liturgies Mignone Congada Milan Fantasia Pavan Milano	Various sacred choral works Pedersøn Vor Gud han er så fast en borg Penderecki	La scuola de' gelosi – Sinfonia Sanz/Murzia Marizapalos 73 Scheidt Canzon cornetto 85 På dig jag hoppas 87 Schnittke Concerto grosso No 1 42 Moz–Art à la Haydn 42 Schoenberg Five Orchestra Pieces, Op 16 54 Verklärte Nacht, Op 4 54 Schreker Vom ewigen Leben 54 Schubert Symphonies Nos 2 & 3 100 Symphony No 9 54 Symphony No 9 45 Schumann Albumblätter, Op 124 72 Carnaval, Op 9 72 Der Himmel hat ein Träne geweint, Op 37 No 1 81 Fantasie, Op 131 54 Frauenliebe und –leben, Op 42 881 Gedichte der Königin Maria Stuart, Op 135 81 Gesänge der Frühe, Op 133 72 Impromptus, Op 5	The Nightingale Puer nobis nascitur Takemitsu A Flock Descends 54 Tárrega Gran vals (arr Goldstone) Totnaikovsky Piano Trio, Op 50 64 Terradellas Sesostri 93 Traditional Cousin Sally Brown Der mange skal komme (arr Spray) Mitt hjerte elltid vanker (arr Spray) 87 Såsom stjärnan uppå Himmelen (arr Berger) Springlåt från Lima (arr Berger) Tromboncino Frottole songs 44 Turnage Anna Nicole Uccellini Questa dolce sirena Urrede 64 Urrede	Zemlinsky Symphonische Gesänge, Op 20 54 Zimmermann, BA Trumpet Concerto 54 Collections Alexander Balanescu; Ada Milea – 'The Island' 75 RCO – 'Anthology 6: 1990–2000' 54 Carl Davis – 'Heroines in Music' 57 Manfred Eicher – 'Sounds and Silence' 220 65 Anthony Goldstone; Caroline Clemmow – 'Delicias' 73 Hesperion XXI – 'Hispania & Japan' 67 'Frottole: Songs from the Courts of Renaissance Italy' 84 Sharon Isbin – 'Guitar Passions' 67 Gidon Kremer – 'Paganini's Daemon: A Most Enduring Legend' (film) 220 73 Bejun Meta – Recital 84 Musik Ekklesia – 'The Vanishing
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Robert Winston

The celebrated scientist and fertility expert reflects on parallels between science and music and the importance of structure to both disciplines

y father was an outstandingly good amateur violinist. He died when I was nine and I have a memory of his playing the *Kreutzer* with my mother accompanying him and my father telling her impatiently that the piano was as important as the violin in Beethoven sonatas! I've been going through my mother's house, three years after her death, and found to my surprise some orchestral scores my father had marked up, so he must have played in an orchestra.

The family is Jewish, but I don't think it can have been a Jewish orchestra my father played in. I don't really know of any, apart from the Yiddish Theatre in the East End which had its own. Culture is very central to being Jewish, though, and it was that cultural and intellectual heritage that brought me back to Orthodox Judaism. People often talk about anti-Semitism, but many non-Jews are also philo-Semitic because of that vast cultural heritage. I support a very talented young violinist, Jacqueline Roche, whom I presented at the Wigmore Hall, and she is also very interested in Jewish culture (she isn't Jewish herself) and is learning to play klezmer music on the violin. At the Wigmore she played Ravel's *Kaddish* and found a great spirituality in it.

One of my great regrets is that, although music was a given in my household, there was never time for me to learn to play the keyboard, which teaches you about the formal relationship of keys, the structure of music in the conventional classical tradition. Structure is important to music, as it is to science. There is immense interest from mathematicians: there is a mathematical notion to counterpoint, yet music goes beyond that. When I start to listen to Franck's Violin Sonata I don't think mathematically just because there's a fugal passage in the last movement where one instrument is playing against another only a bar later. I think in terms of the emotional content.

Do we listen to music because of the structure? Sometimes I think we do. Sonata form after all partly depends for its emotional content on its structure. You need the familiarity with where the first theme is going, perhaps, before you come back to it and start to re-evaluate what you've heard, which is very intriguing.

Scientists always look for structure. But first and foremost? No, we look for structure insofar as it's the likely way of finding your way through a problem. In general, the universe we deal with is not chaotic. It obeys rules, which give us an insight into what we should be likely to find with an experiment. You have a notion from the structure of what other people have discovered or described, what you will find and how you will find it most effectively. The basis of all science is mathematics. Science is essentially a mathematical approach to the universe.

There is a parallel with certain composers, who understood structures so that they could develop, subvert or simplify them. Verdi is a wonderful case in point, one of the most economical of writers.





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The mistake we scientists have made – and have made recently by railroading the UK government to protect (fortunately) the science budget – is in separating science from the arts and humanities. We should see science as a cultural activity. I work at Imperial College and the Royal College of Music is just over the road – the relationship between us is very close. That's why we run a degree in music and physics. It's the same intellectual activity, it uses the same brain, just with different expression. To be a good musician, if you're going to write serial music you've got to understand the structure of music first. You can't just stick notes down on a page. **6**

Professor Winston is presenting Fairytales and Fantasies, including Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf, at Cadogan Hall on February 18 in aid of the Genesis Research Trust. For details, visit genesisresearchtrust.com



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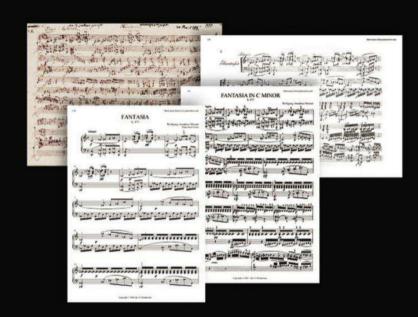
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